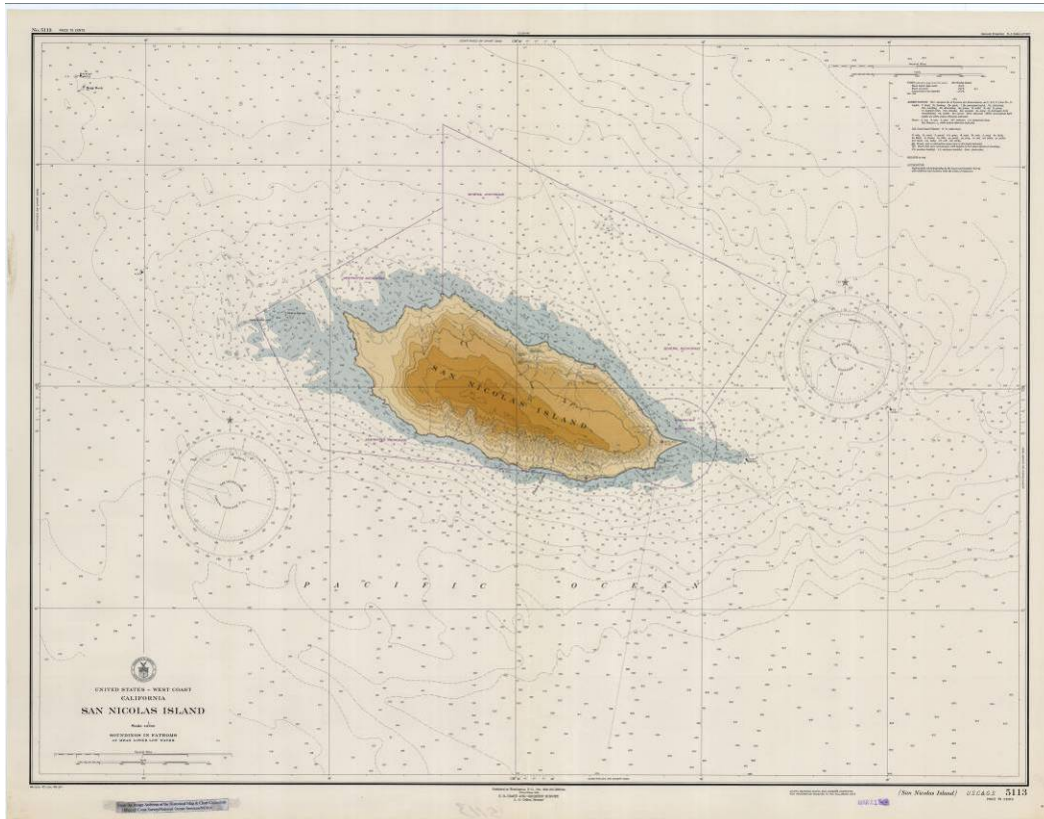


***FINAL REPORT***

**HISTORIC CONTEXT STUDY TO DEVELOP A HISTORIC THEME FOR  
SHIPWRECKS AROUND SAN NICOLAS ISLAND**

**TASK ORDER 0008, CONTRACT N68711-04-D-3623**



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**February 10, 2010**

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# 1. PURPOSE, METHODS, FINDINGS, AND ORGANIZATION

## 1.1. Purpose

The purpose of this study is to offer an historic context for shipwrecks within one mile of San Nicolas Island, from 1542 to 1965.<sup>1</sup> JRP Historical Consulting, LLC, undertook this project at the request of, and in consultation with, Southwest Division, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, under Contract No. N68711-04-D-3623, Task Order 0008. The report enumerates the recorded lost vessels and casualties that JRP was able to identify as having occurred in the vicinity of San Nicolas Island, from the early-nineteenth century through the late-1990s. This study is also intended to:

- a) describe, to the extent possible, how the Abandoned Shipwreck Act of 1988 (PL100-298; 43 U.S.C. 2101-2106) applies to vessels identified as lost in the area around San Nicolas Island; and
- b) provide a framework for shipwreck evaluations – under the provisions of both the Abandoned Shipwreck Act of 1988 and the guidelines furnished in National Register Bulletin 20, *Nominating Historic Vessels and Shipwrecks to the National Register of Historic Places* – leading to determinations of eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

## 1.2. Methods

In preparation of this report, JRP reviewed previous studies, consulted with various state and federal agencies, and undertook research at a variety of libraries, archives, museums, and repositories. Previous studies were examined for applicable content, references, and other information. No prior undertaking has specifically addressed shipwrecks that occurred exclusively in and around San Nicolas Island. In 1999, the Navy prepared a study of shipwrecks within the Point Mugu Sea Range as part of an environmental impact statement: Department of the Navy, Naval Air Weapons Center, Weapons Division, *Point Mugu Sea Range, Environmental Impact Statement, Shipwreck Study*, June 1999. This report identified some shipwrecks within the area encompassed by JRP's study, and offered useful information for this report.

Three other reports, prepared for Channel Islands National Park, likewise focused on submerged cultural resources within the Channel Islands:

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<sup>1</sup>. For the purposes of this project, JRP assumed that Begg Rock (commonly mentioned in conjunction with San Nicolas Island and located approximately eight miles to the northwest) was part of the study, and was examined on the same basis (i.e., "at or near") as San Nicolas Island. Task 0008 Teleconference Kick Off Meeting, October 16, 2008.

- Don P. Morris and James Lima, *Channel Islands National Park and Channel Island National Marine Sanctuary: Submerged Cultural Resources Assessment*, Intermountain Cultural Resource Centers Professional Papers Number 56, Channel Islands National Park, Submerged Cultural Resources Unit, National Park Service, US Department of the Interior (Santa Fe, New Mexico, 1966).
- Matthew A. Russell, *Comet: Submerged Cultural Resources Site Report*, Channel Islands National Park, Submerged Resources Center, Professional Reports, Number 17, Submerged Resources Center, Intermountain Region, National Park Service (Santa Fe, New Mexico, 2004).
- Mathew A. Russell, *Beached Shipwreck Archeology: Case Studies from Channel island National Park*, Submerged Resources Center, Professional Reports, Number 18, Submerged Resources Center, Intermountain Region, National Park Service (Santa Fe, New Mexico, 2005).

These studies, available through the National Park Service's website, were reviewed for their content as well. According to NPS, there are currently no National Register-listed shipwrecks in the vicinity of San Nicolas Island. The nearest listed wreck is the *Winfield Scott*, which sank off Anacapa Island in 1853 and is within the boundaries of the Channel Islands National Park.<sup>2</sup>

State and federal agencies also contributed to this study. The San Nicolas Island Environmental Office, Steve Schwartz in particular, has amassed a considerable collection of documentation relating to shipwrecks at and near the island. Provided to JRP, these materials –spreadsheets, note sets, newspapers clippings, and images – greatly assisted in the identification, description, and illustration of wrecks within the study area.

In addition, assistance and information was obtained either electronically or in person from:

- US DOT Maritime Administration
- The US Navy History and Heritage Command
- National Park Service Shipwreck Database
- California State Lands Commission / California Shipwrecks Database

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<sup>2</sup> "Shipwrecks: The Winfield Scott," Channel Islands National Park, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, website, <http://www.nps.gov/chis/historyculture/winfieldscott.htm>, last accessed July 2, 2009; and Channel Island National Marine Sanctuary Shipwreck Database, website, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, <http://channelislands.noaa.gov/shipwreck/cinms1.html>, last accessed July 2, 2009.

- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Finally, JRP undertook research at libraries and archives, and examined published secondary sources on maritime and naval history as well as on the history of the Channel Islands and San Nicolas Island, in particular. These included monographs, such as K. Jack Bauer's *A Maritime History of the United States: The Role of America's Seas and Waterways*, and journal and newspaper articles such as the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Oxnard Press-Courier*, the *Ventura Star*, and the *Santa Barbara News-Press*.

The following repositories were visited and materials collected in support of this study:

- California State Library, Sacramento
- University of California, Davis, Shields Library
- NPS Cultural Resources Office / Archive, Channel Islands National Park
- National Archives and Record Administration, Pacific Region (San Francisco) and (Laguna Niguel)
- National Maritime Library, San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park
- Museum of Ventura County, Ventura

The files of the NPS Cultural Resources Office at Channel Islands National Park and the holdings of both the National Archives, Pacific Region (San Francisco) and Pacific Region (Laguna Niguel) yielded the most information with regard to wrecked vessels. The NPS Cultural Resources Office maintains files on all shipwrecks located inside and outside the park limits. These records include documentation of wrecked vessels, and newspaper accounts and official investigations of wrecks. At the National Archives, record groups 26 (Records of the United States Coast Guard), 36 (Records of the United States Customs Service), and 41 (Records of the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation) proved invaluable, providing information on vessel construction and design as well as the circumstances of individual wrecks.

### 1.3. Findings

In the course of our research, JRP identified and collected information on 45 shipwrecks and 21 downed aircraft in the vicinity of San Nicolas Island and Begg Rock, from the mid-nineteenth century to the late-twentieth century. Shipwrecks fell into one of two categories: losses, meaning damage to a vessel that entirely compromised its seaworthiness; and casualties, meaning damage to a vessel that resulted or may have resulted in debris but which otherwise did not compromise

the craft. While the stated purpose of this study is to identify shipwrecks within one mile of San Nicolas Island or Begg Rock, in recognition of the potential for elements of wrecks outside of our study area to wash ashore and the difficulty of determining precise locations of wrecked vessels, JRP gathered evidence of losses and casualties for both ships and aircraft reportedly lost within 50 miles of the island and the rock.

We were unable to obtain additional information on six “unknown” shipwrecks identified in the 1999 Point Mugu shipwreck study. According to that study, these wrecks are located either on the island or within three miles of San Nicolas Island. Some of the wrecks discussed in the report below, wrecks for which we do not have specific locations or details, may in fact be these “unknowns.” Further research would be necessary to make such a determination.<sup>3</sup>

Of the 45 identified shipwrecks, 32 occurred within two miles of either San Nicolas Island or Begg Rock; five civilian vessels and five Navy vessels sank between two and 50 miles of the island; and three wrecks previously attributed to San Nicolas Island were determined to have occurred elsewhere in the Channel Islands. Of the 32 wrecks within two miles of San Nicolas Island or Begg Rock, 26 were total losses while six were casualties. Of the losses, 21 were civilian craft while five were Navy target vessels. Of the 32 shipwrecks within two miles of San Nicolas Island or Begg Rock, 15 appear to have occurred within the geographic limits (one mile out from both San Nicolas Island and Begg Rock) and temporal limits (1542-1965) of this study and can be considered shipwrecks under the provisions of the Abandoned Shipwreck Act of 1988, and subject to the guidelines furnished in *National Register Bulletin 20, Nominating Historic Vessels and Shipwrecks to the National Register of Historic Places*, for determinations of eligibility for listing on the National Register. **Figure 2** maps the approximate locations of wrecks for which such information is available.<sup>4</sup>

None of the 15 civilian losses or casualties, however, appears to be eligible for the NRHP. The Navy target vessels, the 20 downed military aircraft, and the civilian lost airplane do not fall under the provisions of the Abandoned Shipwreck Act of 1988.

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<sup>3</sup> For information on these unknowns, see Department of the Navy, Naval Air Warfare Center, Weapons Division, Point Mugu Sea Range, Environmental Impact Statement, Shipwreck Study, June 1999 [hereafter Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study], Table 5-1. In addition, the Point Mugu shipwreck study lists the *Ingersoll* – a vessel that our research indicates is the *Ingersoll* – as having been sunk as a target near San Nicolas Island, but elsewhere identifies the site of the wreck as 8 miles from Santa Catalina Island. As the wreck reportedly is closer to Santa Catalina, information on this Navy target ship is not presented in this report. See Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study, Table 4-2, Table 5-1, and Figure 5-1.

<sup>4</sup> This information is provided for contextual purposes only and is not intended as definitive.



## 1.4. Organization

The report begins by offering an historical overview of San Nicolas Island, seafaring, and shipwrecks from the mid-sixteenth century through the late-twentieth century (**Section 2**) before presenting information on each identified shipwreck that occurred at or near the island in one of two shipwreck sections.

In general, these sections are organized chronologically and place each wreck within its historical context. The first (**Section 3**) discusses those wrecks within two miles of the study area – dividing them either into losses or casualties before treating each in turn. The second (**Section 4**) discusses those wrecks outside of the study area – those that occurred within 50 miles of the island; those that were previously attributed to the island but which research revealed did not in fact occur at the island; and those that were military aircraft. For each shipwreck, all known information on the vessel is presented<sup>5</sup>:

- Official number (if applicable)
- Year built
- Year lost or casualty suffered
- Function / mission
- Dimensions, in feet (as given in either news reports or official documentation): length x beam x draft in the case of civilian vessels; length x beam x depth in the case of naval vessels.
- Tonnage: gross / net (unless otherwise specified)
- Rig / design (as given in either news reports or official documentation)
- Materials: wood, steel, etc.
- Wreck site

A brief narrative description of the loss or casualty event is also offered, as well as available images of the vessel or wreck. **Appendices A, B, and C** summarize this information.

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<sup>5</sup> A single shipwreck generally corresponds to a single vessel, and the count of shipwrecks offered in this report reflects that. However, two unidentified LCIs stranded on San Nicolas Island's Tender Beach in the early 1960s for weapons testing are discussed as a unit below (see **Section 3.1.3**); the two were likely identical in design and came to grief at the same location for the same reason.

The final section of the report (**Section 5**) offers conclusions as to the historical significance of the shipwrecks that occurred within one mile of San Nicolas Island or Begg Rock and discusses management considerations for all the identified wrecks under the provisions of both the Abandoned Shipwreck Act of 1988 and the guidelines offered in *National Register Bulletin 20, Nominating Historic Vessels and Shipwrecks to the National Register of Historic Places*.

## 2. SAN NICOLAS ISLAND, SEAFARING, AND SHIPWRECKS: AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

### 2.1. San Nicolas Island: Geographic Context

Located 70 miles south of Ventura in the Santa Barbara Channel, and 60 miles south-southeast of the US Naval Air Weapons Station, Point Mugu, San Nicolas Island is the outermost of the Channel Islands, and arguably the most treacherous to navigate. The 9.5-mile island rises abruptly out of 300 feet of water. Dense fog frequently engulfs San Nicolas Island and thick beds of kelp surround the island, obscuring numerous shallow reefs and rocks. Cliffs, varying from 500 to 900 feet high, mark the shoreline. From the western tip of the island, an area of shallow water extends for seven miles to the 15-foot volcanic cone that is Begg Rock. In addition, on the eastern end of San Nicolas Island, a sand spit periodically and unpredictably forms and disappears.<sup>6</sup> **Figure 1** depicts San Nicolas Island in relation to the other Channel Islands, and **Figure 2** is a chart of the waters surrounding the island with the approximate locations of wrecks within two miles of San Nicolas Island noted.

San Nicolas Island, like the other Channel Islands, is subject to complex, changing sea currents and surface winds that make seafaring difficult within the Santa Barbara Channel. Generally, the Pacific Ocean flows southward along the California coast in what is called the California Current. At Point Conception, this current strikes the coastline and creates “a northward flowing eddy,” the Southern California Counter Current. Consequently, between July and November, the sea tends to flow south near the Channel Islands and north along the California coastline. During the winter months, beginning in November and continuing into February, the California Current weakens and the Davidson Current emerges. In the Davidson Current, the ocean generally flows northward around the islands and in the channel. High seas and swells are thus common around San Nicolas Island, making the winter an especially treacherous time of year for vessels. Strong surface winds during the spring and early summer can also generate currents that mimic the conditions found between July and November.

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<sup>6</sup> “San Nicolas Island,” *California’s Geographic Names: A Gazetteer of Historic and Modern Names of the State*, ed. David L. Dunham (Clovis, CA: Word Dancer Press, 1998), 1340; Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study, 2-10; and “A History of San Nicolas Island,” Appendix E, U.S. Navy, History of the Pacific Missile Range CY 1964, 380, Folder: History of the Pacific Missile Range CY 1964, Box No. 34, From: 1963 To: 1966, Command Histories, 1959-1974, Pacific Missile Range, Public Affairs Office, Pt. Mugu [hereafter Command Histories, 1959-1974], Records of Naval Districts and Shore Establishments, Record Group 181 [hereafter RG 181], National Archives and Records Administration-Pacific Region (Laguna Niguel) [hereafter NARA-Laguna Niguel].



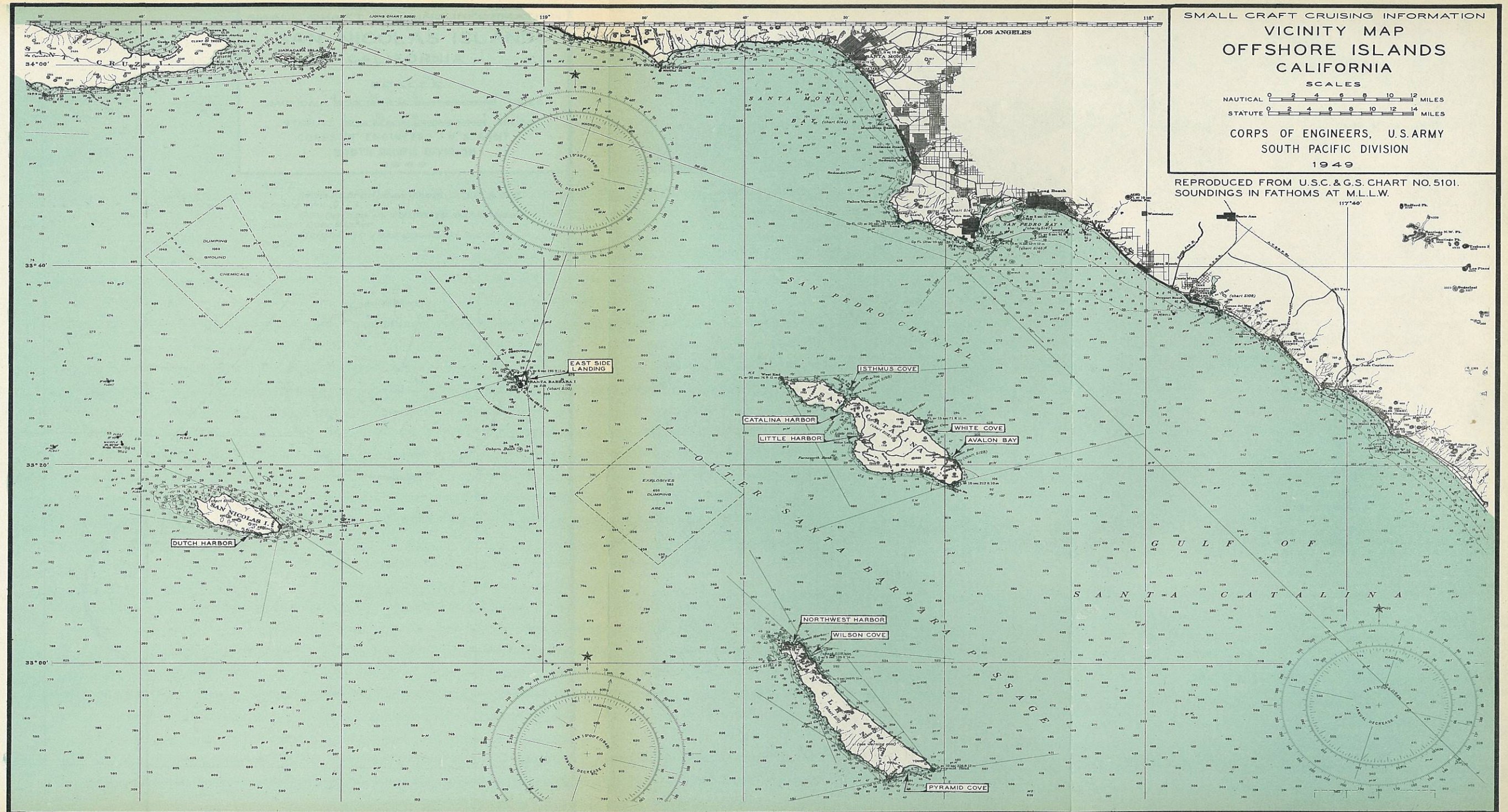


Figure 1. San Nicolas Island and Begg Rock relative to Channel Islands and California Coast  
From US Army Corps of Engineers, Small-boat Harbors and Shelters, Pacific Coast, Coast of California, Information Pamphlet (1949)



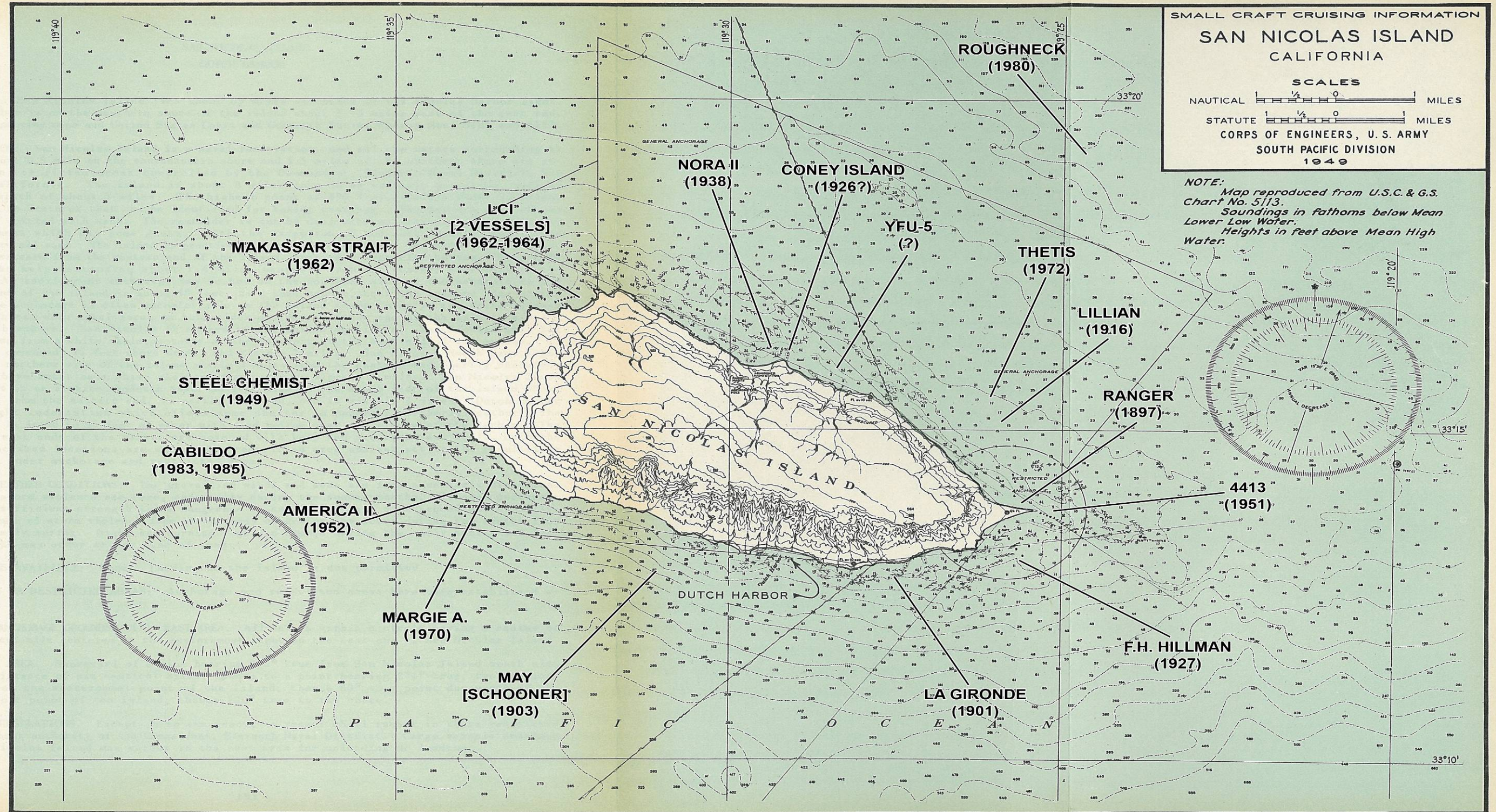


Figure 2. Approximate Locations of Shipwrecks within Two Miles of San Nicolas Island  
 From US Army Corps of Engineers, Small-boat Harbors and Shelters, Pacific Coast, Coast of California, Information Pamphlet (1949)



Because of these conditions, San Nicolas Island and the other Channel Islands have claimed hundreds of vessels, only some of which are discussed below. Finding and identifying wrecks is difficult in this area. The depth of the ocean floor makes it unlikely that losses suffered within one mile of either San Nicolas Island or Begg Rock will ever surface or be accessible to divers. Moreover, ocean currents can shift wrecks and debris and even bring flotsam and jetsam from elsewhere in the Pacific Ocean and along the California coast to the island – conditions that can confuse historic integrity.<sup>7</sup>

## **2.2. The Spanish and Mexican Period: Exploration, Trade, and Sea-Otter Hunting**

Historic seafaring in the vicinity of San Nicolas Island began in 1542 with the arrival of the Spanish vessel, the *San Salvador*. Commanded by the Portuguese navigator Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, the *San Salvador*'s mission was to investigate the northern coast above Baja California. Following Cabrillo's death, the vessel proceeded up to present-day Point Conception before returning south.<sup>8</sup>

Europeans did not return to the Channel Islands for more than half a century. Sixty years after Cabrillo's initial foray, Spanish authorities, concerned over English incursions into the Pacific, sent merchant trader Sebastián Vizcaíno to survey the California coast with an eye toward settlement. From 1602 to 1603, Vizcaíno and his crew mapped the entire coastline, naming features as they went. Encountering San Nicolas Island on December 6, 1602, the Catholic feast day of Saint Nicholas, the crew of the launch, *Tres Reyes*, named the island for the saint.<sup>9</sup>

Others followed in the wake of Vizcaíno, but rarely set foot on San Nicolas Island. Although the British explorer George Vancouver sailed in this area, he nevertheless failed to see the island. In 1847, British Royal Navy captain H. Kellet of *H.M.S. Herald* surveyed both San Nicolas Island and Begg Rock. He described the latter as a “dangerous rock” with “deep water round it.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> “Channel Islands Claimed Many Ships over the Years,” *Oxnard Press-Courier*, December 23, 1958; and Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study, 5-10.

<sup>8</sup> David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 40-42; Eugene D. Wheeler and Robert E. Kallman, *Shipwrecks, Smugglers and Maritime Mysteries* (Ventura, CA: Pathfinder Publishing, 1986), 2-4; and Owen O'Neill, ed., *History of Santa Barbara County, State of California: Its People and Resources* (Santa Barbara: The Union Printing Company, 1939), 23-27; and Point Mugu EIS, 3-2. The location of Cabrillo's death is subject to much debate. Local lore holds that Cabrillo broke his arm on San Miguel and subsequently died on the island; however, exhaustive research by Harry Kelsey indicates that the injury was to his leg, it was sustained on Santa Catalina Island, and that the explorer was buried there and not on San Miguel. Kelsey's 1986 work, *Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo*, remains the most complete biography of the explorer to date.

<sup>9</sup> Weber, *The Spanish Frontier*, 83-84; Wheeler and Kallman, *Shipwrecks*, 3-4; and O'Neill, *History of Santa Barbara*, 36-38.

<sup>10</sup> George Davidson, Assistant Coast Survey, *Coast Pilot of California, Oregon, and Washington Territory*, United States Coast Survey (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1869), 33; Alexander Findlay, *A Directory for*

As the era of exploration gave way to settlement in Alta California in the eighteenth century, seafaring in the vicinity of San Nicolas Island consisted largely of transports from the Philippines and foreign trading vessels. The creation of the mission system in the late-eighteenth century established communities that hugged the California coastline – but it excluded the Channel Islands, making them little more than navigational hazards to be avoided. From the late-sixteenth to the early-nineteenth century, Spanish galleons loaded with silk, porcelain, ivory, and spices sailed from Manila to Acapulco, passing between the southern California coastline and the Channel Islands as they went. Although as many as twelve galleons are thought to have been lost at sea along this route, no record of any shipwreck in the Channel Islands has been uncovered, and only one vessel dating back to that era has been discovered. This craft, reportedly a wooden ship, 60 feet long and between 300 and 400 years old, is resting in less than 20 feet of water off of northwestern San Miguel Island. An Indian legend, repeated into the 1930s, held that a Spanish vessel crashed on San Nicolas Island. This, however, has not been substantiated.<sup>11</sup>

Up until the gold rush, much of the sea traffic through the Channel Island consisted of either hide-and-tallow traders, smugglers, pirates, or some combination of all three. Sea otter pelts, more so than hides and tallow, drew Europeans and other native groups to the Channel Islands and San Nicolas Island especially. Responding to overwhelming European demand for such furs, Russians, and Alaskan and Aleutian natives descended on the islands, over which the Spanish exercised little control. Its remoteness and its wealth of sea otters made San Nicolas Island a favored spot for trappers – so much so that by the early 1800s, it was called “Sea Otter Island.” In 1811, San Nicolas Island’s indigenous sea otter population was severely impacted by a hunting party that was left on the island for a year. Many sea otters were killed, and along with them, Nicoleños that tried to intervene.<sup>12</sup>

These same trends continued into the Mexican period. In the wake of independence from Spain in 1821, the Mexican government had virtually no means of policing the Channel Islands and could do little to stop sea-otter hunting. Moreover, in a bid to raise funds, the government relaxed restrictions on trade. As a result, more foreign vessels began plying their wares along the

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*the Navigation of the Pacific Ocean, Part I: The Coasts of the Pacific Ocean* (London: R. H. Laurie, 1851), 325-326; and Berthold Seemann, *Narrative of the Voyage of H.M.S. Herald During the Years 1845-51, Under the Command of Captain Henry Kellet: Being a Circumnavigation of the Globe, and Three Cruizes to the Arctic Regions in Search of Sir John Franklin* (London: Reeve and Co., 1853), 118.

<sup>11</sup> Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study, 3-2; Morris and Lima, *Submerged Cultural Resources Assessment*, 17-19; and “Lost Treasures of the Pacific,” *Popular Mechanics* 57:3 (May 1932): 730-733.

<sup>12</sup> Davidson, *Coast Pilot of California*, 33; Wheeler and Kallman, *Shipwrecks*, 9-10; and Mark T. Swanson, *An Overview of the History of the Fishing Industry in Southern California and on San Nicolas Island*, Prepared for Naval Air Weapons Station, Point Mugu, California, Technical Report 97-22, Statistical Research, Inc., 1999, 8. See also Adele Ogden, *The California Sea Otter Trade, 1784-1848* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1941), 131.

southern California coastline. One of these was the brig *John Begg*, the first foreign vessel to trade legally along the California coast, and the first known wreck in the vicinity of San Nicolas Island.<sup>13</sup>

San Nicolas Island, unlike other Channel Islands, was never subject to a Mexican land grant, and aside from a dwindling native population was visited largely by sea-otter hunters. The last native inhabitant, the famous “Lone Woman of San Nicolas,” Juana Maria, was removed from the island by sea-otter hunter and ship captain George Nidever in 1853. Despite visitations by sea-otter hunters, no wrecks of such vessels are known to have occurred in this era.<sup>14</sup>

### **2.3. The Gold Rush to the End of the Nineteenth Century: Shipping and Fishing**

The California gold rush (1848-1855) prompted an increase in maritime activity along the California coastline. Many Easterners heading to the gold fields travelled to Panama, proceeded overland through the isthmus, and booked passage on vessels traveling up the California coast. The Pacific Mail Steamship Company organized in 1848 to become the principal operator of this route. The rising volume of ship traffic in and around the Channel Islands elevated the probability of shipwrecks. The most notable wreck was that of the *Winfield Scott* off Anacapa Island in 1853, a wreck that has been investigated and discussed extensively in previous studies.<sup>15</sup>

For the gold rush period, there are no records of any wrecks off of San Nicholas Island or Begg Rock. However, increasing settlement along the California coastline brought changes to San Nicolas Island, changes that later influenced the character of shipwrecks in the vicinity. Shipping, for instance, emerged as a major maritime activity for the island with the introduction of sheep ranching on San Nicolas Island in the late 1850s. In 1858, Martin Kimberly began raising sheep on the island; by the early 1860s, he reportedly had as many as 15,000 in the area

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<sup>13</sup> Findlay, *A Directory*, 325-326; Davidson, *Coast Pilot of California*, 33; *Oxnard Press-Courier*, December 23, 1958; Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study, Table 4-2, 4-4; Nicholas Adams, Shipwreck Report, “John Begg,” Folder 139 Vessel: John Begg (---), Park Acc. CHIS 279/02, Park Cat. 6702, Outside NPS Wrecks, CHIS Shipwreck Research Files, Channel Island National Park [hereafter CINP]. For more on the *John Begg* wreck, see section 3.2.1 below.

<sup>14</sup> Swanson, *History of the Fishing Industry*, 8; William McCawley, *Out Where the Wind Blows and the Breakers Roll High: Sheep Ranching at the North Shore of San Nicolas Island, 1929-1943*, Prepared for Naval Air Weapons State, Point Mugu, California, Technical Report 97-23, Statistical Research, Inc., 1997, 7; Morris and Lima, *Submerged Cultural Resources Assessment*, 9; and *Days of Challenge, Years of Change: A Technical History of the Pacific Missile Test Center* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1990), xvi-xvii. Juana Maria’s story was the basis of the Newberry Medal-winning Scott O’Dell novel, *Island of the Blue Dolphins* (1960).

<sup>15</sup> K. Jack Bauer, *A Maritime History of the United States: The Role of America’s Seas and Waterways* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), 128-131; Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study, 3-2. For scholarship on the *Winfield Scott*, see James Delgado, “Water Soaked and Covered with Barnacles: The Wreck of the S. S. *Winfield Scott*,” *The Pacific Historian* 27(2): 5-21; and Morris and Lima, *Submerged Cultural Resources Assessment*, 19-24.



around Corral Harbor. Kimberly initiated an industry on the island that lasted until the early 1940s when the Navy assumed full control over San Nicolas Island. Over the years, sheep grazing brought several vessels to the island. Ships such as *Ranger* in the 1890s and *Nora II* in the 1920s and 1930s – both of which later wrecked on San Nicolas Island – were engaged in transporting people and sheep from the island to the mainland.<sup>16</sup>

The expansion of the commercial fishing industry in the late-nineteenth century also brought vessels to the waters around San Nicolas Island. In the mid-1890s, the establishment of canneries at San Pedro and Santa Barbara spurred commercial fishing in southern California. By the early-twentieth century, several hundred purse seiners – between 35 and 40 feet in length – plied the waters of the Santa Barbara Channel and the Channel Islands. San Nicolas Island was not as popular as the other Channel Islands were with fisherman; nevertheless, it did attract commercial fishers in the latter third of the nineteenth century. The Chinese led the way in the 1870s and 1880s, drawn by the abalone that could be found at San Nicolas Island. Chinese vessels often put in at Corral Harbor and the crews established temporary camps on the island to process the abalone they caught. By the early twentieth century, fishing companies had begun leasing land on the island for their operations from the federal government.<sup>17</sup>

Despite the remains of fishing operations uncovered on San Nicolas Island by archeologists, during the nineteenth century, there were few recorded wrecks of fishing vessels – or any other vessels – on the island. Indeed, only two vessels were discovered to have come to grief in this period: the *Leon* in 1894 and the *Ranger* in 1897. Both appear to have been commonplace ships of the era – wooden-hulled sailing craft.<sup>18</sup>

## **2.4. The Twentieth Century: Civilian Maritime Activity and the Imposition of Navy Authority over San Nicolas Island**

Fishing and shipping continued to define civilian maritime activity in and around San Nicolas Island into the twentieth century. As evidenced by the wrecks that occurred, a number of large cargo vessels, smaller coasting trade ships, as well as purse seiners and other fishing and pleasure craft plied the waters in the vicinity of the island. In type and character, these vessels ran the gamut from wooden sailing ships early in the century, such as *La Gironde*, to large steel-

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<sup>16</sup> McCawley, *Out Where the Wind Blows*, 7-17; “A History of San Nicolas Island,” Appendix E, U.S. Navy, History of the Pacific Missile Range CY 1964, 380-384, Folder: History of the Pacific Missile Range CY 1964, Box No. 34, From: 1963 To: 1966, Command Histories, 1959-1974, Pacific Missile Range, Public Affairs Office, Pt. Mugu, RG 181, NARA-Laguna Niguel; and *Days of Challenge, Years of Change*, 23. For a discussion of these shipwrecks, see section 3 below.

<sup>17</sup> Swanson, *History of the Fishing Industry*, 15-30 and 79-82; and Point Mugu EIS Shipwrecks Study, 3-8.

<sup>18</sup> Swanson, *History of the Fishing Industry*, 80-81; Bauer, *A Maritime History*, 93-97; and Point Mugu EIS Shipwrecks Study, *ibid.* For a discussion of *Leon* and *Ranger*, see section 3 below.

hulled cargo ships, such as *Thetis*, by mid-century. The variation in the ships lost was indicative of the shifting nature of seafaring and shipbuilding in the twentieth century, away from wooden vessels that relied upon wind to steel- and synthetic-hulled steam screw, gas screw, and oil screw vessels. In the twentieth century, there were a number of innovations in ship technologies – in materials (steel and fiberglass) and equipment (shipping containers and satellite-based navigation) – but there was little innovation in the purposes to which these vessels were applied in and around San Nicolas Island.<sup>19</sup>

An exception can be found in the case of the wreck of *Miss Santa Barbara*. She, like many other vessels that operated in the Channel Islands in the 1920s, was part of the infamous “Rum Line.” Passage of the Volstead Act and adoption of the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution in 1919 brought prohibition of alcohol use to the United States, but it did not quench demand. Bootlegging emerged as a major criminal activity, and along the southern California coast, vessels – such as *Miss Santa Barbara* – operated in the waters of the Santa Barbara Channel, bringing liquor from abroad to Los Angeles and parts of Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. The repeal of Prohibition in 1933 with the adoption of the 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment brought an end to this manner of smuggling.<sup>20</sup>

The imposition of naval authority over San Nicolas Island in the early 1930s had a more profound effect on the character of maritime activity in and around the island in the late-twentieth century. On January 31, 1933, Executive Order 6009 transferred the island to the Navy for “naval purposes.” Following the outbreak of the Second World War, on November 12, 1942, the Navy assigned the island to the Army for the installation of anti-aircraft facilities. With the conclusion of the Second World War, the Navy reassumed authority over San Nicolas Island. On January 22, 1947, San Nicolas Island was made a part of Naval Air Station (later Naval Air Weapons Station), Point Mugu. Since the late 1940s, the Navy has used the island in support of the operations of the Pacific Missile Range.<sup>21</sup>

Maritime traffic in the vicinity of the island consequently has been limited to approximately three miles out from the San Nicolas shoreline. Restricted areas have been established around the island since 1965, and have curtailed fishing in and around the island. Since the early 1990s, the Navy has periodically issued citations to fishermen who stray too close to the island. The net

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<sup>19</sup> For a longer discussion of the shifting nature of US maritime activity and shipbuilding, see Bauer, *A Maritime History*, 288-304 and 311-319.

<sup>20</sup> Wheeler and Kallman, *Shipwrecks*, 63-70 and Eaton, *Diary of a Sea Captain's Wife*, 238-239 and 244. For more on *Miss Santa Barbara*, see section 3.1.2 below.

<sup>21</sup> “A History of San Nicolas Island,” Appendix E, U.S. Navy, History of the Pacific Missile Range CY 1964, 380-384, Folder: History of the Pacific Missile Range CY 1964, Box No. 34, From: 1963 To: 1966, Command Histories, 1959-1974, Pacific Missile Range, Public Affairs Office, Pt. Mugu, RG 181, NARA-Laguna Niguel; and *Days of Challenge, Years of Change*, 23; and Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study, 3-9.

effect, as indicated by this study, has been to reduce the potential of civilian or commercial wrecks within two miles of the island since the 1940s.<sup>22</sup>

Wrecks nevertheless occurred. Indeed, because of the rapid increase in shipping in the early twentieth century and in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, more losses and casualties appear to have happened in the twentieth century than did previously. Many of these losses, moreover, were deliberate – the result of naval weapons testing around the island. Vessels lost in this manner include *Makassar Strait*, *Cabilo*, and *YFU-5*.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Executive Order 6009, January 31, 1933, in General Services Administration, National Archives and Records Service, Office of the Federal Register, *Herbert Hoover: Proclamations and Executive Orders, March 4, 1929 to March 4, 1933, Volume II* (GPO, 1974), 1408; James T. Lima, *San Nicolas Island Lights: A Study of Maritime Aids to Navigation on San Nicolas Island, California*, Prepared for Naval Air Weapons State, Point Mugu, California, Technical Report 97-27, Statistical Research Inc., Tucson, Arizona, and Redlands, California, 1997, 1-2; and “Navy Curbs Fishing Off San Nicolas,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 12, 1990, “San Nicolas Island” Clippings File, Ventura County Museum of History and Art, Ventura, California.

<sup>23</sup> For more on these particular vessels, see section 3.1.3 below.

### 3. SHIPWRECKS WITHIN TWO MILES OF SAN NICOLAS ISLAND AND BEGG ROCK

Within two miles of San Nicolas Island and Begg Rock, 32 shipwrecks occurred – 26 were losses and six were casualties. Of the 32 shipwrecks, one occurred during the Spanish and Mexican Period, two occurred during the nineteenth century, and 29 during the twentieth century. The majority of wrecks – 27 in all – were civilian vessels; only five Navy target vessels were destroyed within two miles of San Nicolas Island. Remains of these wrecks may or may not be present. Some of lost vessels were later salvaged and, as noted above, sea currents and conditions may have transported any remains far away from the actual site of a wreck. Every effort was made to ascertain the precise location of a lost vessel; when in doubt, vessels that reportedly disappeared in the vicinity of San Nicolas Island – such as the sloop *Leon* in the late-nineteenth century and the launch *May* in the early-twentieth century – are treated as losses that occurred within two miles of San Nicolas Island. Information for the wrecks below is presented, organized chronologically within each pertinent historic period.

#### 3.1. Losses

Losses constituted an incident in which a vessel's seaworthiness was entirely compromised – regardless of whether that vessel was completely destroyed or severely damaged and later salvaged. Vessels either reported as total losses or declared total losses by maritime authorities are also included in this category. JRP identified 26 losses from the 1890s to the 1980s. For the twentieth century, civilian losses are discussed separately from lost Navy target vessels.

##### 3.1.1. The Gold Rush to the End of the Nineteenth Century

In the nineteenth century, only one vessel was found to have wrecked at San Nicolas Island: the sloop *Ranger* in 1897. Prior to *Ranger*, the sloop *Leon* disappeared en route to the island. In recognition of the possibility of the remains of *Leon* being discovered within two miles of the island or Begg Rock, it is included here.

##### *Leon*

Official Number: Unknown

Year Built: Unknown

Year Wrecked: 1894?

Function / Mission: Pleasure?

Dimensions: Unknown

Tonnage: Unknown

Rig / Design: Sloop

Materials: Wood

Wreck Site: Unknown

On October 10, 1894, the sloop *Leon* was reported as having disappeared en route to San Nicolas Island for a week-long cruise. The vessel had originated in San Pedro. On board were postmaster James R. Dodson, businessman N.O. Anderson, and “a laborer named Brant.” A Captain Alexander Smith was in charge of the vessel, which put out on October 6. On October 7, a “passing steamer” noted that the vessel was in distress in the midst of a squall. A day after *Leon* was reported missing, a search began for wreckage but the results are unknown.<sup>24</sup>

### *Ranger*

Official Number: 111013

Year Built: 1892

Year Wrecked: 1897

Function / Mission: Shipping

Dimensions: 30.6 x 10.1 x 4.4

Tonnage: 12.75, 12.17

Rig / Design: Sloop

Materials: Wood

Wreck Site: Sand spit on eastern side of San Nicolas Island?

In December 1897, *Ranger*, under the command of a Captain Scherb, accompanied by his son Louis and deckhand Louis Stengel, were conveying Peter Cazes and George Minasjer from San Pedro to San Nicolas Island to care for the sheep. At the time, sheep ranching was centered on the eastern end of the island, near the sand spit. Arriving on December 9, Scherb and his crew anchored the vessel offshore, and accompanied their passengers to the island. While at San Nicolas Island, *Ranger* was dragged out to sea and, according to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, destroyed a few hours later when a storm pushed the vessel onto the rocks of the island. Stranded on San Nicolas Island for a week and forced to subsist on strict rations, the *Ranger*'s crew managed to attract the attention of another passing vessel on December 16 – the four-masted British ship *Roby*, out of London bound for San Diego. Rescued, the crew was brought to San Francisco. The *Los Angeles Times* reported the following January that what remained of *Ranger* was salvaged by “Skipper Gerull” of Los Angeles and brought to the port. While the precise location of the wreck and whatever may remain has not been determined, the wreck may

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<sup>24</sup> “Yachting Party May Be Lost,” (Los Angeles?) *Daily Review*, October 11(?) 1894; and “Fishing Party Missing,” *Lincoln Evening News*, October 11, 1894.

yet be found on the eastern end of the island near the sand spit – in the vicinity of the sheep ranch.<sup>25</sup>

### 3.1.2. The Twentieth Century – Civilian Vessels

In the twentieth century, as befitting the nature of maritime activity in the vicinity of San Nicolas Island, most of the 19 civilian shipwreck losses were related to either shipping or fishing.

#### *La Gironde*

Official Number: 140153

Year Built: 1875

Year Wrecked: 1901

Function / Mission: Shipping

Dimensions: 114.8 x 31.7 x 9.2

Tonnage: 204.51/ 194.61

Rig / Design: Schooner, two masts, center-board

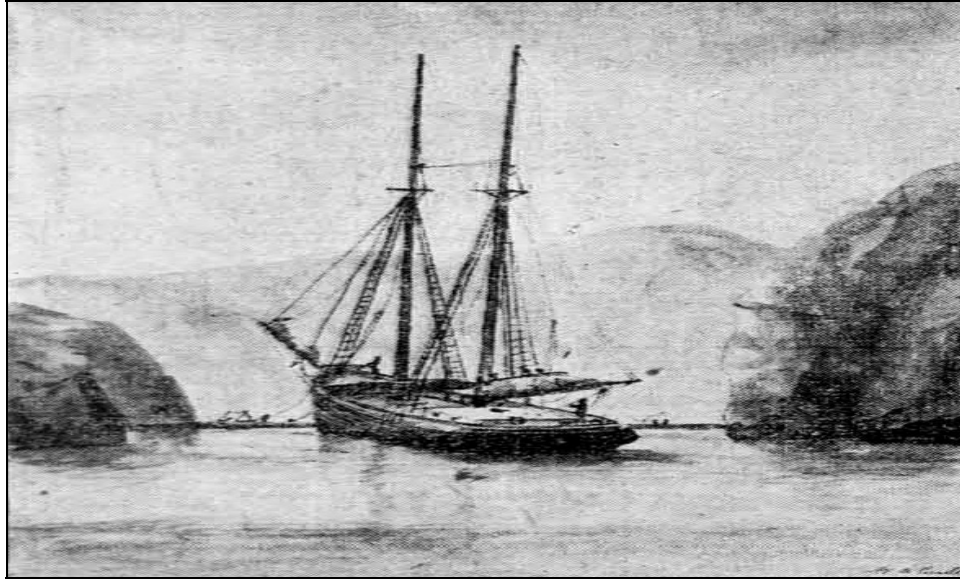
Wreck Site: Southwest shore of San Nicolas Island, three miles from sand spit

On the evening of October 14, 1901, the schooner *La Gironde* went aground reportedly on the northeastern shore of San Nicolas Island; wreck of the vessel, however, was later located on the southwest shore of the island, three miles from the eastern sand spit. Captained by H. L. Grimm, *La Gironde* was out of Redondo Beach, bound for Eureka, California. The exact cause of the loss is unknown. A Coast Guard report on the wreck noted that for three days prior, a dense fog had descended over the area. The night of October 14 was also apparently quite dark, lacking in either moonlight or starlight.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *Annual List of the Merchant Vessels of the United States, for the Year Ended June 30, 1897* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1897), 161 [hereafter *MVUS* and year]; “The Sloop Ranger Wrecked,” *New York Times*, December 20, 1897; “Stranded on San Nicolas Island,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 20, 1897; and “The Ranger Found,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 1, 1898.

<sup>26</sup> Information from Wreck Details, Record #63227, 10/28/2008, Northern Maritime Research, Northern Shipwrecks Database; *MVUS* 1896, 113; and “La Gironde” Wreck Report, November 8, 1901, 35, Folder: Wreck Reports, 1886-1913, Box 1 (of 1), Wreck Reports, 1912-1918, Record Group 36, Records of the US Customs Service [RG 36], NARA-Laguna Niguel. See also, “La Gironde” Wreck Report, March 1, 1902, 150, Copies of Wreck Reports, 1874-1943, Second Subseries, 1898-1943, Box 1, Record Group 26, Records of the US Coast Guard [26], National Archives and Records Administration-Pacific Region (San Francisco) [NARA-San Francisco]. The Northern Maritime Research Shipwrecks Database identifies October 14, 1902 as the date of the wreck of *La Gironde*.



**“The San Francisco owned schooner *La Gironde* on the Beach at San Nicolas Island. The steam schooner *Samoa* Will Attempt to Tow Her Off,” *San Francisco Call*, October 25, 1901<sup>27</sup>**

Little of *La Gironde* likely remains. Although Grimm later claimed that he left the vessel on the sand flats of the island with its anchor down – following standard admiralty practice to ward off salvagers – others reported seeing men from San Pedro dismantling *La Gironde* a week after it went ashore. In early November, the steam schooner *Samoa* apparently encountered some of these early salvagers; the *San Francisco Chronicle* noted that the crew of the *Samoa* was “threatened terrible things.” More than a month following the wreck, as Grimm and his mates were embroiled in a legal dispute over the ownership of the vessel remains, Capt. Alex Smith related to the *Los Angeles Times* that in passing he observed that *La Gironde*’s rudder attachment was missing and “the cement had fallen from her stern butts.” On January 31, 1902, when the revenue cutter *Bear* headed to San Nicolas Island in an attempt to pull the schooner from the island’s sand flats, it failed to find *La Gironde*, and local speculation was that the ship had blown back out to sea. This was apparently not the case. On November 6, 1901, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that the vessel – whatever remained of it – was to be auctioned off at the Merchants’ Exchange in San Francisco. The remains of *La Gironde* may have been identified on the southwestern end of San Nicolas Island, three miles from the eastern sand spit. Without further investigation, a precise determination is impossible to make.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Image provided by San Nicolas Island Environmental Office.

<sup>28</sup> Information from Wreck Details, Record #83027, 10/28/2008, Northern Maritime Research, Northern Shipwrecks Database; *MVUS* 1928, 886 ; “Shipping News and Activities at Los Angeles Harbor,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 18, 1901, October 24, 1901, October 25, 1901, November 22, 1901, January 31, 1902, February 7, 1902; *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 2, 1901 and November 6, 1901; Howorth, *Recent Surveys*, 103-105; Information from Wreck Details, Record # 63227, 10/28/2008, Northern Maritime Research, Northern Shipwrecks Database;

*May* [launch]

Official Number: Unknown

Year Built: Unknown

Year Wrecked: 1909?

Function / Mission: Transport / cultural-scientific survey

Dimensions: unknown

Tonnage: unknown

Rig / Design: Launch

Materials: Wood

Wreck Site: Unknown

On April 16, 1909, the launch *May* left Long Beach, California on an archaeological and biological expedition to San Nicolas Island. Led by a Milton McMillian, the group of five men had sufficient provisions for four days and was expect to return on April 20. On April 23, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that the vessel was three days overdue and that a strong wind and choppy seas had prevailed in the Santa Barbara Channel on April 18 and 19. The *Times* further noted that the crew may have been “able to get into the lee of Santa Barbara Island before the wind struck it.” A search was scheduled to be launched on either April 24 or 25. The results of that search are unknown.<sup>29</sup>

*Selma*

Official Number: Unknown

Year Built: Unknown

Year Wrecked: 1916

Function / Mission: Fishing

Dimensions: Unknown

Tonnage: Unknown

Rig / Design: Launch

Materials: Wood

Wreck Site: Unknown (San Nicolas Island)

On January 8, 1916, the launch *Selma*, owned by a Charles Eckhart of San Pedro, was reportedly driven into San Nicolas Island during a storm and destroyed. Eckhart and his friend Henry

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Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study, Table 4-2 and Table 5-1. Howorth reports that during field studies he located debris on the island in the vicinity of the wreck site that corresponds to materials – most notably, “an 18-foot of keelson, complete with fastening, frames, bottom planks, and even part of the curve of the stem” – that would have comprised *La Gironde*. He did admit that he “cannot as yet say with absolute certainty that this wreckage is part of *La Gironde*.”

<sup>29</sup> “Alarmed for Missing May,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 23, 1909; “Failed to Return from Sea Trip,” April 24, 1909.

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Geberbauer were fishing off the island when the storm occurred. Eckhart survived on the island for a month before his brother, William, rescued him; Geberbauer apparently drowned.<sup>30</sup>

### *Lillian*

Official Number: 207500

Year Built: 1910

Year Wrecked: 1916

Function / Mission: Passenger

Dimensions: 33 x 9.6 x 3.6

Tonnage: 9 / 7

Rig/Design: Gas screw

Materials: Wood

Wreck Site: West side of San Nicolas Island

On the evening of December 9, the passenger vessel *Lillian* – captained by a William Esquibel – was returning to its home port of San Diego when it lost its propeller in the midst of conditions later described as a “moderate gale – cloudy sea, rough moonlight.” Stranded on a reef on the west side of San Nicolas Island, the crew attempted to use sails to free themselves with little success. A Pedro Cordero reportedly came to their assistance and helped the crew to get to shore. *Lillian* was reported a total loss to the US Customs Service.<sup>31</sup>

### *Coney Island*

Official Number: 220164

Year Built: 1920

Year Wrecked: 1920

Function / Mission: Fishing

Dimensions: 54.4 x 15 x 7.2

Tonnage: 40 / 27

Rig / Design: Gas screw

Materials: Wood

Wreck Site: Coney Point, northeast shore of San Nicolas Island

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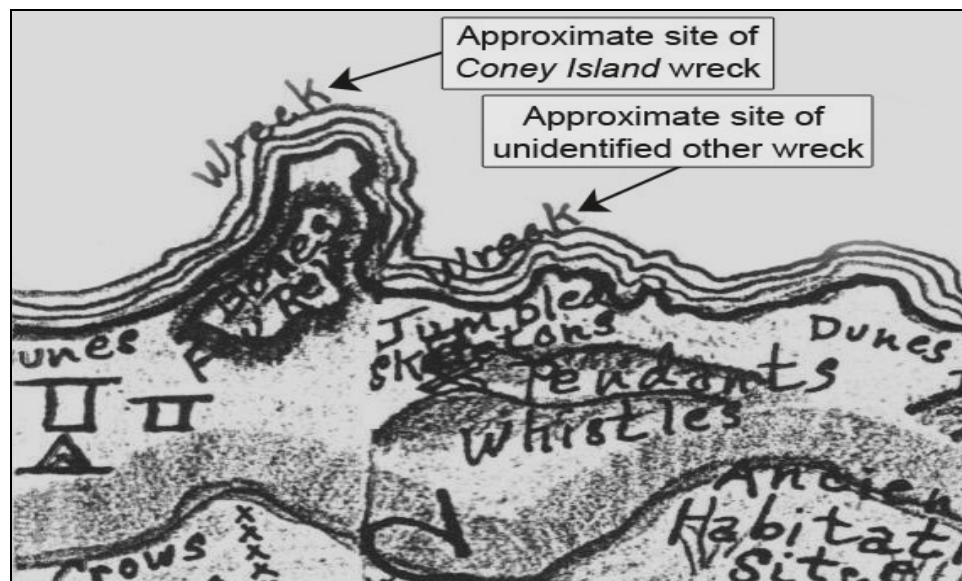
<sup>30</sup> “Second Crusoe Saved at Last,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 9, 1916.

<sup>31</sup> “Lillian,” Wreck Report #27, 125, Folder: Wreck Reports, 1886-1913, Box 1 of 1, Wreck Reports, 1912-1918, RG 36, NARA-Laguna Niguel; *MVUS* 1916, 263; *MVUS* 1917, 427; and Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study Table 4-1.

Very little is known about the circumstances of the wreck of *Coney Island*. The 40-ton fishing vessel, built in Tacoma, Washington but out of Los Angeles, was apparently stranded on the northeast shore of San Nicolas Island on October 16, 1920. The vessel was less than a year old.<sup>32</sup>

Archaeologist Bruce Bryan – who visited the island in 1926 and 1958 and later published his findings as *Archaeological Explorations on San Nicolas Island* (1970) – offers the richest description of the wreck site. In 1926, Bryan encountered the vessel on the northeast shore “partly buried in the wet sand of the beach and partially submerged in water.” According to the archaeologist, as of 1926, “The name ‘Coney Island’...[was] still plainly visible on the bow.” He went on to describe the wreck: “Merely the hull, with a portion of the deck planking remains. (From this I salvaged a handy length of rope, still in good condition, which I later put to use as a tent stay.)”<sup>33</sup>

Bryan later identified the *Coney Island* wreck as one of two in the following sketch map:



Bryan’s 1926 sketch map with approximate site of *Coney Island* wreck indicated on the northeastern shore of San Nicolas Island.<sup>34</sup>

Upon his return to the island in 1958, Bryan again looked for the wreck:

<sup>32</sup> *MVUS* 1920, 215 and *MVUS* 1922, 452.

<sup>33</sup> Bruce Bryan, *Archaeological Explorations on San Nicolas Island*, Southwest Museum Papers No. 22 (Los Angeles: Southwest Museum, 1970), 22. Bryan is also quoted in Wreck notes, 4, San Nicolas Island Environmental Office.

<sup>34</sup> Image courtesy of San Nicolas Island Environmental Office. The second wreck indicated on Bryan’s sketch map has never been identified. It could be one of the wrecks listed above – possibly *Lillian*, *Selma*, the launch *May*, or even remnants of *Ranger* or *Leon* – or another wreck altogether.

I really didn't expect to find it, or any part of it, left after all this long time – so I wasn't disappointed when I didn't. Interestingly enough, however, I did find a US Coast and Geodetic Survey marker on the bluff overlooking the site. Put there probably in the 1930s, it bore a metal plaque engraved “Coney Point” – a more lasting memorial to this ill-fated craft whose history is unknown to me.”<sup>35</sup>

The US Coast and Geodetic Survey did in fact visit the island in 1932, and identified the site of the wreck as “‘Coney Island Point (so called because a fishing boat of that name beached here).” “Around ‘Coney Island Point,’” according to the survey’s descriptive report, “there is a foul area terminating offshore with a sunken rock in Lat 33 – 16 plus 180 m. Long. 119 – 28 plus 1193 m.” This rock at times was covered in about five feet of water, obscured by kelp.<sup>36</sup> This foul area with its sunken rock may have been the reason that *Coney Island* came to grief; without additional information, however, such a determination cannot be made.

### *Miss Santa Barbara*

Official Number: Unknown

Year Built: Unknown

Year Wrecked: 1926

Function / Mission: Passenger / Smuggling

Dimensions: 60 (length)

Tonnage: Unknown

Rig / Design: “High speed” cruiser

Materials: Wood

Wreck Site: Unknown

On May 4, 1926, the Coast Guard reported rescuing two crew members of *Miss Santa Barbara*: Captain G. H. Robson and engineer Joe Thompson. The 60-foot “high speed cruiser” – remodeled in San Francisco in 1925, ostensibly to carry passengers – was engaged in running liquor into Santa Barbara from the Channel Islands. *Miss Santa Barbara* was overtaken by a Coast Guard cutter near San Nicolas Island. The cutter fired upon the vessel, badly damaging its stern and throwing *Miss Santa Barbara*’s captain and engineer overboard. Following a second explosion, the vessel sank off the island’s coast. The precise location of the sinking is unknown.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Bryan, *Archaeological Explorations*, 117-118; and Wreck notes, 4, San Nicolas Island Environmental Office.

<sup>36</sup> Department of Commerce, US Coast and Geodetic Survey, Descriptive Report 5332, Hydrographic Sheet No. 21-1932, Locality: Southern California, San Nicolas Island, 1932, provided by San Nicolas Island Environmental Office.

<sup>37</sup> “Explosion Sinks Speed Boat, Crew Saved by Cutter,” *Oakland Tribune*, May 4, 1926; Margaret H. Eaton, *Diary of a Sea Captain’s Wife: Tales of Santa Cruz Island*, ed. Janice Timbrook (Santa Barbara, CA: McNally & Loftin,

### *Sport*

Official Number: Unknown

Year Built: Unknown

Year Wrecked: 1937

Function / Mission: Fishing (lobster)

Dimensions: Unknown

Tonnage: Unknown

Rig / Design: Unknown

Materials: Unknown

Wreck Site: Unknown

On December 22, 1937, the 35-foot fishing boat *Sport* with a crew of two – Frank Vincent of San Pedro and a individual only known as Fernando – disappeared in the vicinity of San Nicolas Island sometime between Christmas and the first of the year. The two were reportedly engaged in lobster fishing off the coast of the island. In early January 1937, the Coast Guard searched the area around San Pedro and San Clemente for the men. No information was found as to the results of that search.<sup>38</sup>

### *Nora II*

Official Number: 216272

Year Built: 1918

Year Wrecked: 1938)

Function / Mission: Fishing

Dimensions: 55.4 x 15.2 x 5.4

Tonnage: 24 / 16

Rig / Design: Oil screw

Materials: Wood

Wreck Site: North shore of San Nicolas Island, one mile from Coney Point

On March 24, 1938, *Nora II*, an oil-screw fishing vessel capsized between 200 and 300 yards off the north side of San Nicolas Island during high seas. Captain Alvin Hyder perished, while two crewmembers – one of whom was Hyder's son Denton – who had been aboard a dory that also capsized survived by swimming ashore. Hyder was a fixture of Channel Islands shipping for more than four decades. Since 1918, Hyder and his son had transported people and goods to and from San Nicolas Island via *Nora II* – although the vessel was not licensed for shipping. On the

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West, 1980), 238-239 and 244; Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study, Table 4-1. See also, Wreck notes, 4, San Nicolas Island Environmental Office.

<sup>38</sup> "Sea Hunt Starts for Fishing Boat Week Overdue," *Los Angeles Times*, January 4, 1937; and "Plane Helps Hunt for Boat," January 5, 1937.

morning of March 24, Hyder had dispatched Denton and crewmember George Garvin in a dory to pick up sheep, cargo, and passengers while he remained on *Nora II* anchored just off the coast. According to the subsequent report of the “C” Marine Investigation Board, charged with ascertaining the loss of the vessel and its captain,

Three trips were made, bringing back luggage only and on the third return trip blind breakers, breaking in the vicinity of the NORA II made it necessary for the dory to proceed approximately 300 yards beyond the NORA II, from where a breaker was seen to turn the NORA II upside down. The crew members in the dory endeavored to return to the NORA II for the purpose of saving the master who had last been seen standing near the pilot house, but another large breaker capsized the dory and threw its two occupants into the water.

Garvin clung to some wreckage while Denton Hyder, endeavored to save his father. Although he came within 25 feet of Hyder, Denton was struck by another breaker, “after which he never saw his father again.” Using a Navy radio station on the island, Garvin and Hyder contacted the Coast Guard in San Pedro. The Coast Guard first dispatched a plane, but when it was unable to land on San Nicolas Island because of high winds, the cutter *Itasca* was sent from Santa Catalina Island to render assistance. It too encountered difficulties because of the weather and was unable to retrieve Garvin and Denton Hyder until the following day. What remained of *Nora II* was left off the coast; Garvin reported giving instructions to the island inhabitants “to burn her up.” The remains of this wreck have been located on the north shore of San Nicolas Island, one mile from Coney Point.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> “Boat Capsizes; Man Drowned,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 25, 1938; and “Boat Tragedy Survivors Land,” March 26, 1938; “Nora II,” Box 7, From: Mary Irene II To: Ocean Gift, Index of Marine Documents, 1936-1965, Marine Safety Office, Long Beach, CA, RG 26, NARA-Laguna Niguel; Application of Owner or Master for Official Number, Department of Commerce, “Nora II,” May 4, 1918, Folder 103 Vessel: Nora II, Park Acc. CHIS 279/01, Park Cat. CHIS 6702, Shipwrecks Inside NPS, Louise Ray-Zingara, CHIS Shipwreck Research Files, CINP; Joseph J. Meany and Joseph A. Moody, “C” Marine Investigation Board to Director, Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation, Department of Commerce, April 12, 1938; Joseph J. Meany and Joseph A. Moody, “C” Marine Investigation Board to Director, Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation, Department of Commerce, In the Matter of a Preliminary Investigation by a “C” Marine Investigation Board Into the Circumstances Surrounding the Capsizing of the Motor Fishing Vessel “Nora II” of 27 Gross Tons, at 8:05 A.M. on March 24, 1938, on the North Side of San Nicolas Island, and the Loss of the Master, Alvin Hyder, April 22, 1938; and Hearing, In the Matter of a Preliminary Investigation by a “C” Marine Investigation Board Into the Circumstances Surrounding the Capsizing of the Motor Fishing Vessel “Nora II” of 27 Gross Tons, at 8:05 A.M. on March 24, 1938, on the North Side of San Nicolas Island, and the Loss of the Master, Alvin Hyder, Reported by A. I Miller, reporter, 10:10 a.m., April 20, 1938, San Pedro, California, “Nora II,” Marine Vessel Inspection & Investigation, Case Files, 1913-14, Records of the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation, Record Group 41 [RG 41], NARA-San Francisco; Howorth, *Recent Surveys*, 103; Wreck notes, 5, San Nicolas Environmental Office; and Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study, Table 4-2 and 5-1 and Figure 5-1.

Similar wreck investigations by the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation may exist for the other wrecks discussed in this report at Archives II, the National Archives at College Park, Maryland. Such research, however, was beyond the scope of this study.



*Nora II* washed ashore on northern side of San Nicolas Island, 1938<sup>40</sup>

### *Empress*

Official Number: 202834

Year Built: 1906

Year Wrecked: 1942

Function / Mission: Shipping

Dimensions: 77.5 x 18.4 x 2.7

Tonnage: 39 / 26

Rig / Design: Gas screw, barge

Materials: Unknown

Wreck Site: Unknown (San Nicolas Island)

On May 28, 1942, the barge *Empress* was beached on San Nicolas Island. Based out of Los Angeles, it had been engaged in local shipping for several years, serving variously as a fishing boat and a shipping vessel. *Empress* apparently had wrecked previously on Catalina Island. The exact circumstances of the vessel's San Nicolas Island wreck are unknown.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Photograph courtesy of Buster Hyder, on file, Santa Cruz Island Foundation, provided by San Nicolas Island Environmental Office.

<sup>41</sup> Department of Commerce, Consolidated Enrollment and License, "Empress," June 8, 1942, December 10, 1941, September 21, 1937, June 9, 1937, April 4, 1936, May 17, 1934, May 4, 1932, July 6, 1920, June 10, 1920, August 1, 1911, Folder 43B Vessel: Empress, Park Acc. CHIS 279/01, Park Cat. CHIS 6702, Shipwrecks Inside NPS, Adore-Louise D, CHIS Shipwreck Research Files, CINP; Information from Wreck Details, Record #90419, 10/28/2008, Northern Maritime Research, Northern Shipwrecks Database; Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study, Table 4-1; Wreck notes, 4, San Nicolas Island Environmental Office; and Howorth, *Recent Surveys*, 103.

C.W.W. 26

Official Number: 175716

Year: Built: 1943

Year Wrecked: 1943

Function / Mission: Shipping

Dimensions: 61.4 x 21.65 x 4.55

Tonnage: 58 / 58

Rig / Design: Scow, no propelling power

Materials: Steel

Wreck Site: Unknown (San Nicolas Island)

On December 5, 1943, the scow C.W.W. 26, out of Los Angeles, ran aground on San Nicolas Island in heavy seas. Although built earlier that year, the vessel nevertheless broke up as a result of the stranding. The precise location of its wreck is unknown. Some divers have reportedly located a steel barge off the coast of San Nicolas Island, but it is unknown which side of the island that this barge has been located.<sup>42</sup>

#4413

Official Number: 176214

Year Built: 1944

Year Wrecked: 1951

Function / Mission: Shipping

Dimensions: 117.5 x 40 x 9.15

Tonnage: 389.69 / 389

Rig / Design: Scow

Materials: Wood

Wreck Site: Sand spit on eastern side of San Nicolas Island

On December 5, 1951, high seas broke the scow #4413 loose from its moorings off the San Nicolas Island coast and pushed the vessel up on the island's beach. According to the report later filed with the Coast Guard by the master of #4413, David Root, the craft was "pounded to

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<sup>42</sup> Bruce D. Berman, *Encyclopedia of American Shipwrecks* (Boston: The Mariner's Press Incorporated, 1972), 204; Information from Wreck Details, Record #95312, 10/28/2008, Northern Maritime Research, Northern Shipwrecks Database; *MVUS* 1946, 804; United States Customs Service, Application of Owner for Official Number, Port of San Pedro, California, March 10, 194, Folder: 175716 Scow C. W. W. 26, Vessel Documentation Files, 1938-1983, Port of Los Angeles, RG 36, NARA-Laguna Niguel; and Consolidated Enrollment and License, 175716, May 19, 1945, and "Vessels Lost" from *MVUS* 1946, Folder 58 Vessel: C. W. W. 26 175716, Park Acc. CHIS 279/02, Park Cat. CHIS 6702, Outside NPS Wrecks, CHIS Shipwreck Research Files, CINP; Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study, Table 4-1; C.W.W. 26 wreck information; and Wreck notes, 5, San Nicolas Island Environment Office.

pieces.” According to the Coast Guard, #4413 was a total loss. The site of the wreck has been located on the sand spit on the eastern side of San Nicolas Island.<sup>43</sup>

### *America II*

Official Number: Unknown

Year Built: Unknown

Year Wrecked: 1952

Function / Mission: Fishing

Dimensions: 45 (length)

Tonnage: Unknown

Rig / Design: Unknown

Materials: Unknown

Wreck Site: Western side of San Nicolas Island

On January 13, 1952, 45 mile-an-hour winds drove the fishing vessel *America II* aground on the western side of the island. *America II*'s master, George Knowlton and his shipmate Charles Winqvist had travelled out to the island to fish for rock cod. Knowlton reported that he and shipmate Charles Winqvist were asleep when the ship's "mooring line, fixed to a mooring buoy, parted at the end"; they awoke when the ship ran aground on the beach. The Coast Guard endeavored to free the vessel, but according to the *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, "the 45-foot fishing boat went broadside and began breaking up." Knowlton and Winqvist were later flown home to San Pedro. The precise location of this wreck on the western side of the island has not been determined.<sup>44</sup>

### *Ginger*

Official Number: 247604

Year Built: 1945

Year Wrecked: 1954

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<sup>43</sup> *MVUS* 1951, 414; *MVUS* 1953-1954, 744; Information from Wreck Details, Record #99396, 10/28/2008, Northern Maritime Research, Northern Shipwrecks Database; United States Maritime Commission, Oath of Officer of Incorporated Company, Donald K. Grant, Secretary, Guy F. Atkinson Company, March 2, 1945; Application of Owner for Official Number, "4413," March 8, 1945; Designation of Home Port of Vessel, Port: Los Angeles, California, Date: March 8, 1945; Notice to Owner of Master of Ward of Official Number and Signal letters, Date: March 14, 1945; Memorandum from Chief, Search and Rescue Station, 11<sup>th</sup> CG District to Marine Inspection Officer, Long Beach, California, Subject: Marine casualty, information on, 19 February 1952; Report of Marine Casualty (or Accident), "4413," February 26, 1952; Folder: 176214 Scow "4413" Lost, Box 3, Vessel Documentation Files, 1938-1983, Port of Los Angeles, RG 36, NARA-Laguna Niguel; Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study, Table 4-3 and Table 5-1. See also Folder 131 Vessel: "4413" Scow, Park Acc. CHIS 279/01, Park Cat No. CHIS 6702, Shipwrecks Inside NPS, Louise Ray-Zingara, CHIS Shipwreck Research Files, CINP.

<sup>44</sup> "Inch-Plus Rain Hits City; Winds Rip Lines, Trees," *Los Angeles Times*, January 13, 1952; and "Winds Blow Ship Aground off Nicolas," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, January 12 and "Wreck Boat's Skipper is Home," January 14, 1952.



Function / Mission: Fishing  
Dimensions: 31.7 x 10.6 x 4.6  
Tonnage: 9 / 6  
Rig / Design: Oil screw  
Materials: Wood  
Wreck Site: Unknown (San Nicolas Island)

At 4:30 on the morning of August 1, 1954, the sole crew member of *Ginger*, its master Robert Serbin, radioed the Coast Guard that his vessel's engine room was filling with water and *Ginger* was going down near San Nicolas Island. A search plane was dispatched and found Serbin on a life raft, according to the *Los Angeles Times*, "amidst the wreckage of the *Ginger*." Another nearby fishing craft, *Jenny Lou II*, was directed to the rescue. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, "Serbin was later transferred to another vessel, the *Don*, in good condition." The precise location of the wreck has not been determined.<sup>45</sup>

#### *Volga Boatman*

Official Number: 216498  
Year Built: 1918  
Year Wrecked: 1954  
Function / Mission: Fishing  
Dimensions: 59 x 15.3 x 6.3  
Tonnage: 44 / 18  
Rig / Design: Oil screw  
Materials: Wood  
Wreck Site: Unknown

On September 22, 1954 the Coast Guard rushed to the aid of the fishing vessel *Volga Boatman*, which reportedly was sinking with four crew members on board near San Nicolas Island, some 70 miles southwest of San Pedro. The fate of the boat and the location of the wreck are unknown.<sup>46</sup>

#### *Deep Six*

Official Number: Unknown  
Year Built: Unknown  
Year Wrecked: 1963

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<sup>45</sup> *MVUS* 1953, 204; *MVUS* 1955, 738; "Fishing Vessel Captain Saved as Boats Sinks," *Los Angeles Times*, August 2, 1954; and Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study, Table 4-1.

<sup>46</sup> "Last-Minute News – Boat Carrying Four Feared Lost," *Los Angeles Times*, September 22, 1954; and *MVUS* 1953-1954, 549.

Function / Mission: Passenger / Pleasure  
Dimensions: 30 (length)  
Tonnage: Unknown  
Rig / Design: Cruiser  
Materials: Unknown  
Wreck Site: Half-a-mile from San Nicolas Island

On May 20, 1963, a 30-foot cruiser named *Deep Six* reportedly struck a reef half a mile from the island and sank. The vessel had been circling the island when it struck a submerged rock. The seven individuals aboard – owner Robert Goudy of Torrance and his wife Colleen; brother-in-law Dave Martin; Harold Tommy Hart and his wife Catherine; and Charles Fournier and his wife Veronica – attempted to bail water out of the boat but were unsuccessful. The seven elected to abandon *Deep Six* and make their way to San Nicolas Island. The men, according to the *Santa Barbara News Press*, “swam to shore, pushing the three women who rode aboard a rubber life raft.” The exact whereabouts of this wreck have not been determined.<sup>47</sup>

### *Jazzbo*

Official Number: Unknown  
Year Built: Unknown  
Year Wrecked: 1963  
Function / Mission: Passenger / Pleasure?  
Dimensions: 30 (length)  
Tonnage: Unknown  
Rig / Design: Cabin cruiser  
Materials: Unknown  
Wreck Site: Unknown (San Nicolas Island)

On July 30, 1963, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that three individuals had been stranded on San Nicolas Island when their 30-foot cabin cruiser *Jazzbo* sank offshore. The Coast Guard dispatched a helicopter and an airplane to rescue the stranded party. No other information regarding this wreck was uncovered in the course of our research.<sup>48</sup>

### *Margie A*

Official Number: 258165 / ex. LCVP C 20551  
Year Built: 1943

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<sup>47</sup> “Seven Saved as Pleasure Craft Sinks,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 20, 1963; “Boat Sinks; Seven Reach Isle on Raft,” *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, May 20, 1963; “7 Safe After Cruiser Sinks in Channel,” *Santa Barbara News Press*, May 20, 1963, Folder 59 Vessel: Deep Six, Park Acc. CHIS 279/02, Park Cat. CHIS 6702, Outside NPS Wrecks, CHIS Shipwreck Research File, CINP.

<sup>48</sup> “3 Marooned as Cruiser Sinks,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 30, 1963.

Year Wrecked: 1970

Function / Mission: Fishing

Dimensions: 33.1 x 10.7 x 4.7

Tonnage: 12 / 5

Rig / Design: Oil screw, converted Navy LCVP (Landing Craft Personnel Vehicle)

Materials: Wood

Wreck Site: 500 yards off southwest end of San Nicolas Island

On December 18, 1970, the 33-foot, wood-hulled, oil-screw yacht *Margie A* foundered 500 yards off the southwest end of San Nicolas Island. *Margie A* had been built in Michigan in 1943, as a Navy LCVP and was later converting into a fishing vessel. The 1999 Point Mugu shipwreck study indicates that the wreck of *Margie A* is at or near the water line.<sup>49</sup>



An LCVP similar to *Margie A* on display at the National Museum of the United States Navy, Washington Navy Yard, District of Columbia<sup>50</sup>

### *Roughneck*

Official Number: 271277

Year Built: 1956

Year Wrecked: 1980

Function/Mission: Fishing

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<sup>49</sup> *MVUS* 1970, 538; *MVUS* 1973, 620, 1336, 1661; and *MVUS* 1974, 1636, Folder Vessel: *Margie A* 258165, Park Acc. CHIS 279/02, Park Cat. CHIS 6702, Outside NPS Wrecks, CHIS Shipwreck Files, CINP; Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study, Table 5-1 and Figure 5-1.

<sup>50</sup> Image taken from the Historic Naval Ships Association website. Historic Naval Ships Association, Historic Naval Ships Visitors Guide, website, <http://www.hnsa.org/ships/lcvp.htm>, last accessed July 2, 2009.

Dimensions: 64.83 (length)  
Tonnage: 39 / 32  
Rig/Design: Diesel, 450-hp engines  
Materials: Steel  
Wreck Site: Two miles northeast of San Nicolas Island.

On January 16, 1980, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that the fishing boat *Roughneck* sank in rough seas two miles northeast of the island. The vessel was captained by a Scott Johnson; only one crewmember – discovered 40 miles away in a life raft – survived.<sup>51</sup>

### *Sara Jane*

Official Number: 255802  
Year Built: 1948  
Year Wrecked: 1984  
Function / Mission: Fishing  
Dimensions: 37.8 x 12.8 x 5.7  
Tonnage: 18.49 / 8  
Rig / Design: Oil Screw  
Materials: Wood  
Wreck Site: Unknown (San Nicolas Island)

On December 15, 1984, the fishing boat *Sara Jane* capsized in high winds and waves reportedly “near San Nicolas Island.” Two men were thrown in the water; only one was rescued and taken to the island. The disposition of this vessel and the precise location of the wreck are unknown, although *Sara Jane* was recorded as lost five days following its capsizing.<sup>52</sup>

### 3.1.3. The Twentieth Century – Navy Target Vessels

While details of the loss of vessels and craft engaged in US Naval activities is difficult to obtain, five have been located within two miles of San Nicolas Island – *Makassar Strait*, two unidentified LCIs (Landing Craft, Infantry), *Cablido*, and *YFU-5*. Neither these five vessels nor the five lost between two and 50 miles of San Nicolas Island fall under the provisions of the

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<sup>51</sup> Small Passenger Vessel Inspection Book, “Roughneck,” 271 277, Los Angeles, Calif., 7 April ’67, Folder Roughneck 271277 1967; Certificate of Inspection, Roughneck, 271 277, Date Certificate Expires: 7 April 1973, Folder Roughneck 271277 1970, Box 9, Vessel Inspection Files, 1962-1971, RG 36, NARA-Laguna Niguel; and “3 Days at Sea,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 16, 1980.

<sup>52</sup> Application of Owner for Official Number, July 2, 1948, Folder 255082 o/s Sara Jane Home Port San Diego, Box No. 38, Vessel Documentation Files, 1938-1983, RG 36; “Sara Jane,” Box 9 From: Rhapsody To: Skookumchuch Index of Marine Documents, 1936-1965; “Sara Jane,” Box 30 From: RO To: SE, Index of Marine Documents, 1966-1988, Marine Safety Office, Long Beach, CA, RG 26, NARA-Laguna Niguel; and *Los Angeles Times*, December 15, 1984.

Abandoned Shipwreck Act of 1988 (see **Section 4.1.3** below). According to the Sunken Military Craft Act of 2005, all military craft – naval vessels as well as air- and spacecraft – are not considered abandoned. Instead, the military retains ownership of the wrecks, regardless of the passage of time, unless the United States specifically divests itself of title. The act bars “any activity directed at a sunken military craft that disturbs, removes, or injures any sunken military craft.” Archaeological, historical, and education studies of sunken military craft are permitted only by authorization of the Secretary of Defense.<sup>53</sup> Information on wrecked sea craft is nevertheless presented here in the interest of completeness; information on target vessels lost between two and 50 miles of San Nicolas Island and downed military aircraft is presented separately (**Sections 4.1.3** and **4.3** respectively).

### *Makassar Strait*

Official Number: ex. AVG-91 / ACV-91 / CVE-91 / CVU-91

Year Built: 1944-

Year Wrecked: 1962

Function / Mission: Navy Escort Carrier / Target

Dimensions: 512.25 x 65.16 x 22.34 (maximum)

Tonnage: 7,800 (standard displacement)

Rig / Design: *Casablanca*-class Escort Carrier, 9,000-hp Skinner Uniflow engines, two screws

Materials: Steel

Wreck Site: Northwestern shore of San Nicolas Island

*Makassar Strait* was originally named *Ulitaka Bay* but was renamed before its commissioning in honor of the first American surface action in the Pacific War – a raid against a Japanese transport convoy in the passage between Borneo and Celebes in January 1942. The vessel was reclassified several times as an escort carrier, before it became CVE-91. *Makassar Strait* served primarily as a training vessel for pilots during the Second World War, earning two battle stars for her service. The escort carrier was deactivated and decommissioned in August 1946 and entered the Pacific Reserve Fleet at Tacoma, Washington. In June 1955, *Makassar Strait* was reclassified as CVU-91. Three years later in August 1958, the Secretary of the Navy authorized the vessel for use as a target and in September, *Makassar Strait*'s name was struck from the Navy list.<sup>54</sup>

In May 1961, the vessel was stranded off San Nicolas Island, and the following year was used in a naval testing program. The former escort carrier, however, was not lost during an exercise. In

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<sup>53</sup> See Title XIV, “Sunken Military Craft Act,” Ronald W. Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005, available at <http://www.history.navy.mil/branches/org12-12a.htm#ftn1>, last accessed July 9, 2009.

<sup>54</sup> K. Jack Bauer and Stephen S. Roberts, *Register of Ships of the U.S. Navy, 1775-1990* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 129-131; “Makassar Strait,” *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, Department of the Navy – Naval Historical Center, website, [http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/m2/makassar\\_strait.htm](http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/m2/makassar_strait.htm), last accessed June 29, 2009.

1962, *Makassar Strait* broke loose from its anchorage off Red Eye Beach during a storm. The vessel was driven into the northwestern shore of San Nicolas Island. At low to moderate tide, the wreck site is accessible. Debris from *Makassar Strait* – cables, machinery, and even the teak deck planks – is visible and scattered over the shore.<sup>55</sup>



*Makassar Strait* stranded off northwestern shore of San Nicolas Island, June 1962.<sup>56</sup>



Black-and-white photograph of *Makassar Strait* from above, ca. June 1962.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Bauer and Roberts, *Register of the Ships*, 131; and Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study, Table 4-3 and Table 5-1. Descriptive information on wreck site provided by San Nicolas Island Environmental Office.

<sup>56</sup> Image courtesy of San Nicolas Island Environmental Office.

*Unidentified LCI (Landing Craft, Infantry) [2 vessels]*

Official Number: Unknown

Year Built: 1942?

Year Wrecked: 1962-1964

Function / Mission: Troop transport / Target

Dimensions: 158.46 x 23.25 x 3.13 (mean)

Tonnage: 216 (light), 234 (landing), 389 (loaded)

Rig / Design: Two sets of GM diesel engines, four per shaft, twin variable-pitch propellers

Materials: Steel

Wreck Site: "Tender Beach," northwest shore of San Nicolas Island

Two unidentified LCIs, likely of the same basic configuration as detailed above, were deliberately grounded on San Nicolas Island on what is now known as "Tender Beach" on the northwest shore of the island in the early 1960s. In general, LCIs were used during the Second World War to transport troops from Navy vessels off-shore to on-shore battle sites. They were introduced with the North African campaign of 1943 and continued to be in service through the Normandy invasion of 1944. LCIs were utilized not only in the Mediterranean and Western Europe theaters but also the South Pacific. These particular LCIs were used during testing of the BULLPUP missile on the Pacific Missile Range. Today, the wreckage of these LCI is visible after storms have removed sand from the beach (see photographs below).<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Photograph from the collection of Paul Silverstone, provided by San Nicolas Island Environmental Office.

<sup>58</sup> The details of the LCI offered above come courtesy of NavSource Online, Amphibious Photo Archive, <http://www.navsource.org/archives/10/15/150001.htm>, last accessed July 10, 2009. See also the LCI entries in Thomas Parrish and S.L.A. Marshall, *The Simon and Schuster Encyclopedia of World War II* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978). Information on these specific vessels was obtained from William Townsend on June 21, 2008 and provided by San Nicolas Island Environmental Office.

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**The beached LCIs, August 1962<sup>59</sup>**



**Remains of the LCIs on Tender Beach<sup>60</sup>**

### *Cabildo*

Official Number: ex. LSD-16

Year Built: 1945

Year Wrecked: 1983, 1985

Function / Mission: Navy Landing Ship Dock / Target

Dimensions: 457.75 x 72.17 x 18 (maximum)

<sup>59</sup> Photograph courtesy of San Nicolas Island Environmental Office

<sup>60</sup> Photograph courtesy of San Nicolas Island Environmental Office



Tonnage: 4,900 (standard displacement)

Rig / Design: *Casa Grande*-class Landing Ship Dock

Materials: Steel

Wreck Site: 300 feet offshore of the western side of San Nicolas Island

*Cabildo* was named for the historic New Orleans town hall at which the transfer of the Louisiana Territory from France to the United States took place. The vessel was a typical Landing Ship Dock (LSD), designed to transport, dock, repair, and launch small craft. She served during the Second World War, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. *Cabildo* earned two battle stars during the Korean War and seven during the Vietnam War. Decommissioned in March 1970 at Long Beach, the vessel returned to the Pacific Reserve Fleet.



*Cabildo* (LSD-16) anchored off the coast of Hawai'i, 1964<sup>61</sup>

In October 1976, *Cabildo* was struck from the Navy Register and was made into a target vessel in December 1983. On its last trip out from San Diego Naval Station, the craft was reportedly set adrift west of San Nicolas Island, approximately 80 to 100 miles from Los Angeles. Following test exercises, *Cabildo* broke free from the tugs sent to retrieve it. The vessel drifted to San Nicolas Island, and ran aground on the southwest side. When attempts to extricate *Cabildo* failed, fuel tanks, a generator, and other “salvageable equipment” was removed and the sea was permitted to claim the vessel. The wreck occurred sometime between December 1983 and September 1985. The *Cabildo* wreck site has been located 300 feet offshore of the western

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<sup>61</sup> Photo taken by LT Richard Dawson USNR *USS Renville*. “U.S.S Cabilo, LSD-16,” LSD, Dock Landing Ship, NavSource Online, Amphibious Photo Archive, <http://www.navsource.org/archives/10/12/1216.htm>, last accessed February 12, 2009.

side of the island. Between 1989 and 2002, the superstructure of *Cabildo* was visible above the water line.<sup>62</sup>

### YFU-5

Official Number: ex. LCT-592 / LSU-592 / LCU-592 / YFU-5

Year Built: 1943

Year Wrecked: Unknown

Function / Mission: Navy Harbor Utility Craft / Target

Dimensions: 119.08 x 32.67 x 5 (maximum)

Tonnage: 320 (maximum floating displacement)

Rig / Design: *Landing Craft Tank (Mark 6)*, three Grey Marine Diesels, three propellers, 225-hp per shaft

Materials: Steel

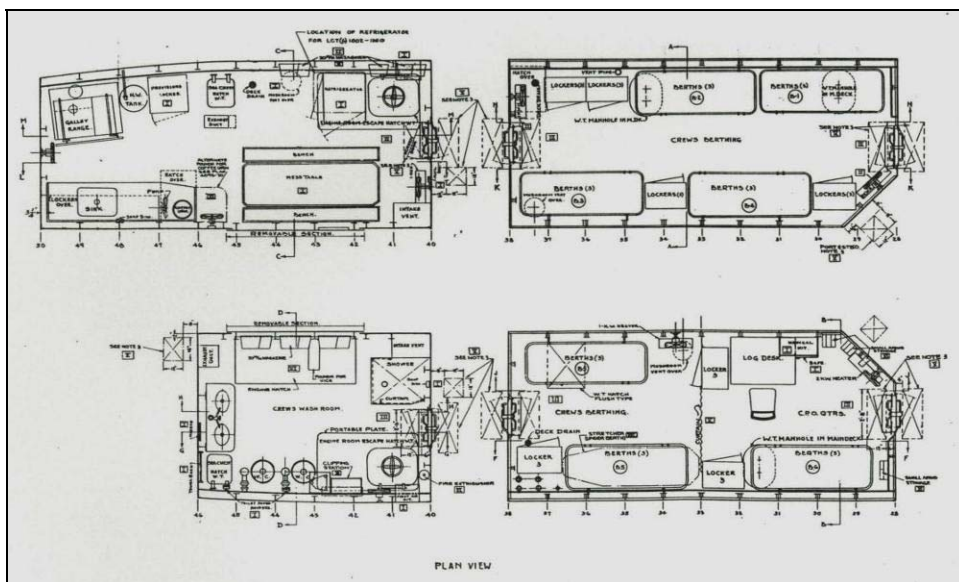
Wreck Site: Northwestern shore of San Nicolas Island, half-a-mile east of Coney Point

Little is known about *YFU-5* beyond its early operational history and its destruction at San Nicolas Island. The vessel was launched in October 1943, designated as a Landing Craft Tank (Mark 6), *LST-592*. It later participated in the Normandy invasion during the Second World War, and earned a battle star for its service during the conflict. In 1949, the craft was re-designated Landing Ship Utility, *LSU-592*; seven years later, it was designated as Landing Craft Utility, *LCU-592*. In 1958, the vessel was reclassified as a Harbor Utility Craft, *YFU-5*. At some point, *YFU-5* was struck from the Navy Register and became a target vessel. It is unknown when it was destroyed. The wreck is located on the beach, half-a-mile east of Coney Point. At low tide, it is visible and accessible; however, over the past two decades a significant amount of deterioration of the wreck has taken place (see photograph below).<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> “*Cabildo*,” *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, Department of the Navy – Naval Historical Center, website, <http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/c1/cabildo.htm>, last accessed February 9, 2009; “U.S.S *Cabildo*, LSD-16,” LSD, Dock Landing Ship, NavSource Online, Amphibious Photo Archive, <http://www.navsource.org/archives/10/12/1216.htm>, last accessed February 12, 2009; *Cabildo* information furnished by Senior Managers, Naval Air Center, Weapons Division, San Nicolas Environmental Office; and Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study, Table 4-2 and Table 5-1. The Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study lists the vessel’s lost date as “unknown” and the *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships* offers no date. NavSource Online, a website of naval history maintained by volunteers, provides September 1985 as the date of *Cabildo*’s sinking while the information provided by the Naval Air Center, Weapons Division via the San Nicolas Environmental Office indicates that *Cabildo* was made into a target in December 1983. Additionally, the Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study lists the ship as *Kabildo*, while all other consulted sources list her as *Cabildo*. Descriptive information on wreck site provided by San Nicolas Island Environmental Office.

<sup>63</sup> “Landing Craft Tank LCT-592, Landing Ship Utility LSU-592, Landing Craft Utility LCU-592, Harbor Utility Craft YFU-5,” *NavSource Online: Amphibious Photo Archive*, website, <http://www.navsource.org/archives/10/18/180592.htm>, last accessed July 3, 2009; and Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck



Deck Plan of an LCT Mark 6.<sup>64</sup>



LCTs aground at low tide on a Normandy beach, July 15, 1944 – LCT-592 is at far left.<sup>65</sup>

Study, Table 4-2 and Table 5-1. Descriptive information on wreck site provided by San Nicolas Island Environmental Office.

<sup>64</sup> "The Deck plan for the LCT Mk 6," *World War II Landing Craft Tanks*, website, <http://ww2lct.org/frames.htm>, last accessed August 18, 2009.

<sup>65</sup> National Archives Photo #80-G-253000. Image taken from "Landing Craft Tank LCT-592, Landing Ship Utility LSU-592, Landing Craft Utility LCU-592, Harbor Utility Craft YFU-5," *NavSource Online: Amphibious Photo Archive*, website, <http://www.navsource.org/archives/10/18/180592.htm>, last accessed July 3, 2009.



LCT 1346 at Aitape, New Guinea June 19, 1945<sup>66</sup>



YFU-5 on San Nicolas Island today<sup>67</sup>

### 3.2. Casualties

Casualties constitute incidents in which a vessel was damaged in the course of seafaring near San Nicolas Island or Begg Rock and may have left debris as a result of this damage, but was otherwise able to proceed on its way. Casualties are distinguished from lost vessels that are later salvaged. A total of six civilian casualties occurred within two miles of San Nicolas Island and Begg Rock from the 1820s through the 1970s.

#### 3.2.1. *The Spanish and Mexican Period*

In the Spanish and Mexican period (1542-1849) and between 1849 and 1900, only one vessel was found to have wrecked on either San Nicolas Island or Begg Rock: the British brig *John Begg*, which later gave its name to the volcanic cone eight nautical miles from San Nicolas Island.

##### *John Begg*

Official Number: Unknown

Year Built: 1820

Year Wrecked: 1824

Function/Mission: Shipping

Dimensions: Unknown

Tonnage: 160

<sup>66</sup> “LCT-1346 beached at Aitape, New Guinea, 19 June 1945,” “Landing Craft Tank LCT-592, Landing Ship Utility LSU-592, Landing Craft Utility LCU-592, Harbor Utility Craft YFU-5,” *NavSource Online: Amphibious Photo Archive*, website, <http://www.navsource.org/archives/10/18/180592.htm>, last accessed August 19, 2009. <http://www.navsource.org/archives/10/18/181346.htm>

<sup>67</sup> Image courtesy of San Nicolas Island Environmental Office.

Rig/Design: Brig, single deck

Materials: Wood

Wreck Site: Begg Rock, seven miles from San Nicolas Island

*John Begg* was a 160-ton, wood-hull, single-decked brig of Peruvian registry, built in 1820. Commanded by John Lincoln, the vessel was operated by John Begg & Co., a trading firm out of Lima, Peru. In March 1822, it made its first voyage to California, trading for hides and tallow with the missions along the coast. On September 24, 1824, *John Begg* was bound for San Pedro, with several tons of hides, when it struck the small rocky island located approximately eight miles northwest of San Nicolas Island that now bears its name. The vessel was ultimately freed from the rock, repaired, and remained in service until 1849.<sup>68</sup>

No other vessels are known to have wrecked in the vicinity of San Nicolas Island or Begg Rock, between 1849 and 1900.

### 3.2.2. The Twentieth Century – Civilian Vessels

In the twentieth century, from the early 1900s into the 1970s, five civilian vessels suffered casualties at San Nicolas Island – the schooner *May*, the purse seiner *New Moon*, the tanker *F. H. Hillman*, the freighter *Steel Chemist*, and the tanker *Thetis*. All of these were engaged in either fishing or shipping.

*May* [schooner]

Official Number: Unknown

Year Built: Unknown

Year Wrecked: 1903

Function / Mission: Fishing (lobster)

Dimensions: Unknown

Tonnage: Unknown

Rig / Design: Schooner

Materials: Wood

Wreck Site: Southern end of San Nicolas Island

The schooner *May*, according to the *Los Angeles Times*, ran aground on a rock on the southern end of San Nicolas Island on January 3, 1903. The vessel, captained by Frank Manha, was

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<sup>68</sup> Findlay, *A Directory*, 325-326; Davidson, *Coast Pilot of California*, 33; Wreck notes, 4, San Nicolas Island Environmental Office; Howorth, *Recent Surveys*, 102; Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study, Table 4-2 Information from Wreck Details, Record # 19212, 10/28/2008, Northern Maritime Research, Northern Shipwrecks Database; Nicholas Adams, Shipwreck Report, "John Begg," Folder 139 Vessel: John Begg (---), Park Acc. CHIS 279/02, Park Cat. 6702, Outside NPS Wrecks, CHIS Shipwreck Research Files, CINP.

engaged in lobster fishing between San Pedro and the island. The tug *Warrior* freed *May* and brought her into the inner harbor of San Pedro before the vessel sank just past Dead Man's Island.<sup>69</sup>

*F.H. Hillman*

Official Number: 221695

Year Built: 1919

Year Lost: 1927

Function / Mission: Shipping

Dimensions: 500 x 68.2 x 30

Tonnage: 9,835 / 6,006

Rig / Design: Steam screw, tanker

Materials: Steel

Wreck Site: Southeast end of San Nicolas Island

On the evening of February 17, 1927, the Standard Oil tanker *F. H. Hillman* ran aground on the southeast end of San Nicolas Island, "seventy-seven miles southwest" of San Pedro. Like other vessels before and after it, the tanker was stranded on the island in dense fog. At the time, *F.H. Hillman* was reportedly one of the largest tankers in service. Ultimately no assistance was required from either the Coast Guard or passing vessels – the vessel was able to free itself from the island and continue on its way.<sup>70</sup>

*New Moon*

Official Number: 217498

Year Built: 1919

Year Lost: 1931

Function / Mission: Fishing

Dimensions: 55 x 14.3 x 6.6

Tonnage: 36 / 24

Rig / Design: Gas screw, purse seiner

Materials: Wood

Wreck Site: Unknown (San Nicolas Island)

On February 8, 1931, the Coast Guard came to the aid of the 55-foot purse seiner *New Moon*. The fishing vessel, built in 1919 in Los Angeles, was reportedly in distress off the island's coast.

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<sup>69</sup> "Harbor-Town Drift Wood," *Los Angeles Times*, January 7, 1903.

<sup>70</sup> *MVUS* 1927, 72; "Grounded Tanker Escapes," *Los Angeles Times*, February 18, 1927; "F. H. Hillman," Record of Casualties to Vessels, March 3, 1927, 29, Copies of Wreck Reports, 1874-1943, Second Subseries, 1898-1943, Box 7, RG 26, NARA-San Francisco.



Coast Guard Cutter 254 took *New Moon* to the lee side of the island and assisted the crew in making repairs.<sup>71</sup>

### *Steel Chemist*

Official Number: 252037

Year Built: 1943

Year Wrecked: 1949

Function / Mission: Shipping

Dimensions: 468.5 x 69.6 x 29.5

Tonnage: 7,956 / 4,560

Rig / Design: Steam screw, double hull, C-3 cargo carrier

Materials: Steel

Wreck Site: South side of the northwest corner of San Nicolas Island

The most dramatic merchant vessel wreck on San Nicolas Island of the post-World War II era was that of the *Steel Chemist* in April 1949. On April 10, the Isthmian Steamship Lines freighter bound for the Los Angeles-Long Beach Harbor and laden with a heavy cargo of sugar, coconuts, and rubber struck “rocks in a dense fog” at high speed, tearing a hole in the ship. So severe was the damage, it was later discovered that the rocks had penetrated completely through the ship’s double hull. *Steel Chemist* was left beached on the south end of San Nicolas Island. According to an in-depth report made by the *Pacific Marine Review* in May 1950, the vessel was lodged on the south side of the northwest corner of the island “with a pinnacle rock ledge beneath her No. 4 hold.” *Steel Chemist* was entirely surrounded by rocks – 150 feet off her port bow and 225 feet off her starboard bow there were rock ledges, and reef was off her port quarter. Initially, Coast Guard buoy tender *Diligence* and the salvage tug *Kanak* endeavored to free the cargo ship; it was expected that given the double-hull of *Steel Chemist* that the vessel could be re-floated. Within two days, however, it became plain that such a task was not easily accomplished. By April 13, five salvage tugs, a derrick barge, and half-a-dozen cargo lighters were engaged in what was described as “the biggest attempted [salvage job] in these waters in many years.” To keep *Steel Chemist* from listing a salvage tug was lashed to the freighter. On April 16, the vessel was reportedly freed and by April 17, had been towed to Long Beach.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Application of Owner or Master for Official Number, Official Number 217498, Port of Los Angeles, January 13, 1919, Folder: 217498 g/s New Moon, Box 6, Vessel Documentation Files, 1938-1983, Port of Los Angeles, RG 36, NARA-Laguna Niguel; and “Shipping News and Activities at Los Angeles Harbor,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 9, 1931.

<sup>72</sup> *MVUS* 1949, 524; Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study, Table 3-1 and 5-1. “Grounded Ship Awaits Rescue by Coast Guard,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 11, 1949, “Periled Ship Passengers Ashore,” April 12, 1949, “Effort to Float Ground Ship Gets Under Way,” April 13, 1949, “Vessel Freed From Rocks in Five-Day Salvage Battle,” April 16, 1949, “Isthmian Ship Towed to Berth at Long Beach,” April 17, 1949; “Ship Aground on Rocks,” *New York Times*,

## *Thetis*

Official Number: 279627

Year Built: 1959

Year Wrecked: 1972

Function / Mission: Shipping

Dimensions: 685.1 x 93.2 x 48.8

Tonnage: 23,611 / 14,576

Rig / Design: Steam screw, tanker

Materials: Steel

Wreck Site: 2,000 yards off eastern end of San Nicolas Island

On April 17, 1972, the tanker *Thetis* – out of Long Beach bound for Guam – was nearly grounded 2,000 yards off the eastern end of San Nicolas Island in April 1972. Encountering high seas, the crew found their engines disabled approximately 15 miles from the island and six hours from Long Beach. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, currents and strong winds pushed *Thetis* to within two miles of the island before the crew managed to drop anchor about 2,000 yards off the eastern end of San Nicolas Island to prevent grounding. Both the Navy and the Coast Guard rushed to the vessel's assistance and attempted to take *Thetis* in tow. Eventually, without power, the crew was forced to cut the anchor and chain so that two commercial tugs could free their ship. *Thetis* was towed to San Pedro for repairs, leaving the anchor and chain behind.<sup>73</sup>

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April 11, 1949, "Freighter Still on Rocks," April 13, 1949; "Salvage of S. S. 'Steel Chemist'," *Pacific Marine Review*, May 1950, 31.

<sup>73</sup> "Disabled Tanker Taken Under Tow in Heavy Seas," and "Tanker in Danger of Drifting Aground," *Los Angeles Times*, April 18, 1972; and *MVUS* 1972, 998.

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## 4. SHIPWRECKS AND OTHER LOST CRAFT OUTSIDE THE STUDY AREA

In the course of our research, JRP also identified 34 shipwrecks and other lost craft that were outside of the study area – losses that occurred between two and 50 miles of San Nicolas Island or Begg Rock; losses that have been previously attributed to the island but which further investigation suggests occurred elsewhere; and downed aircraft in the vicinity of San Nicolas Island. Of those losses that occurred between two and 50 miles of the island or the rock, five were Navy target vessels, and five were of a civilian character. Three other wrecked civilian craft, attributed in previous studies to San Nicolas Island, were found to have occurred elsewhere in the Channel Islands. As for the downed aircraft – 21 altogether – these do not fall under the purview of the Abandoned Shipwreck Act of 1988. Twenty of these aircraft were Navy fighters and bombers; one was a civilian seaplane. As with the target vessels, the Sunken Military Craft Act of 2005 governs the administration of downed Navy aircraft. Despite the fact that all of these wrecks are outside of the study area, information on them is presented below to address the potential for elements of these wrecks to wash up on the shore of San Nicolas Island, and in the case of the three wrecks located elsewhere, to help clarify existing information.

### 4.1. Wrecks within Two and 50 Miles of San Nicolas Island or Begg Rock

All the shipwrecks between two and 50 miles of San Nicolas Island and Begg Rock occurred during the twentieth century and all were losses. As with **Section 3.1** above, information on these losses is divided between civilian vessels and Navy target vessels.

#### 4.1.1. The Twentieth Century – Civilian Vessels

In the twentieth century, five vessels – all fishing boats – were lost between two and 50 miles of San Nicolas Island and Begg Rock: *Red Wing* in 1928, *Standard II* in 1951, *Pacific* in 1951, *Gaga* in 1963, and *Intruder* in 1982.

##### *Red Wing*

Official Number: 220328

Year Built: 1920

Year Wrecked: 1928

Function / Mission: Fishing

Dimensions: 50 (length)

Tonnage: 43 (gross)

Rig / Design: Gas-screw, purse seiner

Materials: Wood

Wreck Site: Seven miles off southern coast of San Nicolas Island

On February 18, 1928, the 50-foot purse seiner *Red Wing* reportedly sank seven miles off the southern coast of San Nicolas Island. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, “her seams opened up, while fishing for sardines.” The precise location of the sinking is undetermined.<sup>74</sup>

### *Standard II*

Official Number: 235956

Year Built: 1927

Year Wrecked: 1951

Function / Mission: Fishing

Dimensions: 66.9 x 17.3 x 7.1

Tonnage: 70 / 34

Rig / Design: Oil screw

Materials: Wood

Wreck Site: 35 miles southwest of Begg Rock; 40 miles due west of San Nicolas Island

In previous studies, the fishing vessel *Standard II* has been confused with another vessel, *Standard No. 1* (see **Section 4.2** below).<sup>75</sup> *Standard II* foundered 35 miles southwest of Begg Rock on July 2, 1951. The fishing vessel was out of San Pedro, returning from “Mexican Fishing Waters” according to a statement later given to the Coast Guard by the boat’s master Albert L. Downs. In the early morning hours of July 2, *Standard II* laden with 25 tons of tuna, suddenly began taking on water and listing to starboard. Downs reported that the situation rapidly progressed from bad to worse:

When I saw that she was listing bad, I called the crew. By the time all crew members were out of the bunks the vessel had keeled over. We had put a skiff over the side and abandoned the ship. The vessel sunk about ten minutes later.

Neither Downs nor any other crew member was able to radio for assistance; however, the nearby Navy vessel *Bedouin* was able to pick up the crew, who were later transferred to the *Mission Soledad* before being landed at San Francisco. The *Standard II* was later declared a total loss.

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<sup>74</sup> “Shipping News and Activities at Los Angeles Harbor,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 21, 1928; “Channel Islands Claimed Many Ships over the Years,” *Oxnard Press-Courier*, December 23, 1958; Howorth, *Recent Surveys*, 103; Record of Marine Casualties, Vessel: Red Wing, File No. 641, Treasury Department, U.S. Coast Guard, Folder 117 Vessel: Red Wing, Park Acc. CHIS 279/01, Park Cat. CHIS 6707, Shipwrecks Inside NPS, Louise-Ray-Zingara, CHIS Shipwreck Research Files, CINP; Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study, Table 4-1.

<sup>75</sup> Howorth addressed this confusion in his 1988 report, *Recent Surveys of Certain Cultural and Historic Sites at San Nicolas Island: An Interim Report*. The 1999 Point Mugu shipwreck study nevertheless appears to conflate the two vessels, the *Standard II* and *Standard No. 1*. See Howorth, *Recent Surveys*, 103; and Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study, Table 4-2 and 5-1.

The 1999 Point Mugu shipwreck study reports that the wreck of the vessel is located 40 miles west of San Nicolas Island in nearly 3,000 feet of water.<sup>76</sup>

### *Pacific*

Official Number: 227246

Year Built: 1928

Year Wrecked: 1951

Function / Mission: Fishing

Dimensions: 73 x 18.7 x 8.6

Tonnage: 89 (gross)

Rig / Design: Oil screw, purse seiner

Materials: Wood

Wreck Site: 33° 21' N. and 119° 19' W – 15 miles northeast from San Nicolas Island

The purse seiner *Pacific* had a unique career leading up to her demise. Built in 1928 as a fishing vessel, it was acquired twelve years later by the Navy and converted into a coastal minesweeper, and renamed *Sparrow*. A month later, *Sparrow* was re-classified as a harbor tug and its name cancelled. In February 1941, the vessel was renamed *Marin* and designated a harbor net tender, YN-53. Following sea trials, *Marin* was towed to Pearl Harbor in April 1941, where it tended nets in the 14<sup>th</sup> Naval District throughout the Second World War. *Marin* was re-designated YNT-21 in early April 1942. At the war's end, the boat was sold into private ownership in March 1948, where it regained its original name, *Pacific*, and was converted back to a fishing vessel. Three years later, on the morning of October 27, under the command of Haruo Seko, the vessel began to sink inexplicably somewhere between 10 and 15 miles northwest of San Nicolas Island. Seko radioed the Coast Guard for assistance, and the eleven-member crew was rescued by a seaplane as *Pacific* continued to sink. The vessel was reportedly lost at coordinates 33° 21' N. and 119° 19' W. The Point Mugu Shipwreck Study locates the wreck 15 miles northeast from San Nicolas Island in more than 3,500 feet of water.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Information from Wreck Details, Record #99301 10/28/2008, Northern Maritime Research, Northern Shipwrecks Database; MVUS 1951, 532; "Standard II," Box 10, From: Smith Thompson To: Utacarbon, Index of Marine Documents, 1936-1965, Marine Safety Office, Long Beach, CA, RG 26, NARA-Laguna Niguel; Report of Marine Casualty (Or Accident), "Standard II," July 10, 1951 and Oath of Master To Loss of Document, Department of Commerce, Albert L. Downs, Master of the "Standard II," July 9, 1951, Folder 275 Vessel: Standard II, 235956, Park Acc. CHIS 279/02, Park Cat. CHIS 6702, Outside NPS Wrecks, CHIS Shipwreck Research Files, CINP; and Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study, Table 4-2 and Table 5-1.

<sup>77</sup> "Seiner Sinks, Plane Saves 11," unidentified press clipping, "List of Vessels" from MVUS1950, 419, Master Carpenter's Certificate, March 6, 1928, Folder 105 Vessel: Pacific, Park Acc. CHIS 279/01, Park Cat. CHIS 6702, Shipwrecks Inside NPS, Louise Ray-Zingara, CHIS Shipwreck Research Files, CINP; "Pacific" (Ex. USS YNT-21), Box 8, From: Oceania To: Rex, Index of Marine Documents, 1936-1965, Marine Safety Office, Long Beach, CA, RG 26, NARA-Laguna Niguel; Morris and Lima, *Submerged Cultural Resources Assessment*, 136; "Sparrow," *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, Department of the Navy – Naval Historical Center, website,

### *Gaga*

Official Number: 280973

Year Built: 1950

Year Wrecked: 1963

Function/Mission: Fishing

Dimensions: 35.3 x 11.5 x 3.8

Tonnage: 13.19 / 10

Rig/Design: Oil-screw

Materials: Wood

Wreck Site: Ten miles east of San Nicolas Island

On April 29, 1963, *Gaga*, a fishing vessel bound for its home port of San Diego, foundered ten miles east of San Nicolas Island. *Gaga* was engaged in the abalone trade. At approximately 8 PM in the midst of choppy seas and gusty winds (reportedly 15 to 20 miles an hour), the vessel began taking on water and listing 15 degrees to port. The two crew members, Charles Conway and Robert Earl Lott, abandoned *Gaga* when it began to sink; only Conway, however, was rescued by the Coast Guard. The subsequent accident report declared both the boat and Lott lost.<sup>78</sup>

### *Intruder*

Official Number: Unknown

Year Built: Unknown

Year Wrecked: 1982

Function / Mission: Fishing (sea urchins)

Dimensions: 43 (length)

Tonnage: Unknown

Rig / Design: Diving vessel

Materials: Unknown

Wreck Site: 14.5 miles northeast of Begg Rock

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<http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/s16/sparrow.htm>, last accessed June 29, 2009; and “*Marin*,” *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, Department of the Navy – Naval Historical Center, website, <http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/m5/marin-i.htm>, last accessed June 29, 2009; Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study, .

<sup>78</sup> Report of Vessel Casualty or Accident, “Ga Ga,” May 2, 1963; and Certificate of Admeasurement, March 29, 1960, Folder: 280973 *Gaga*, Box 34, Vessel Documentation Files, 1938-1983, Port of San Diego, RG 36, and “*Gaga*,” Box 20, From: FR To: GR, Index of Marine Documents, 1966-1988, Marine Safety Office, Long Beach, CA, RG 26, NARA-Laguna Niguel; “Million-to-One Shot,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 30, 1963 and “Sea Combed for Man Missing n Boat Sinking,” May 1, 1963; “Fisherman Saved, One Missing,” *Pasadena Star-News* April 30, 1963 and “Coast Guard Seeks Body of Fisherman,” May 1, 1963.

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On January 9, 1982, the urchin diving vessel *Intruder*, out of the Channel Islands Harbor, encountered rough conditions and sank 25 miles north of San Nicolas Island. The *Intruder* had been harvesting sea urchins in and around the island for a Ventura-based firm that sold them to Japan. After collecting more than 3½ tons of urchins, the boat turned to home and encountered high northeasterly winds. The forward section of *Intruder* subsequently sprung a leak and when efforts to staunch the flow failed, the crew called in the Coast Guard for a rescue. The 1999 Point Mugu shipwreck study reports that the wreck of the vessel is located 14.5 miles from Begg Rock in 6,000 feet of water.<sup>79</sup>

#### 4.1.2. The Twentieth Century – Navy Target Vessels

As noted above (**Section 3.1.3**), sunken military craft – such as the five target vessels discussed below – do not fall under the purview of the Abandoned Shipwreck Act of 1988 and are included here only in the interests of completeness.

##### *Unidentified LCI (Landing Craft, Infantry)*

Official Number: Unknown

Year Built: 1942?

Year Wrecked: 1945

Function / Mission: Troop transport

Dimensions: 158.46 x 23.25 x 3.13 (mean)

Tonnage: 216 (light), 234 (landing), 389 (loaded)

Rig / Design: Two sets of GM diesel engines, four per shaft, twin variable-pitch propellers

Materials: Steel

Wreck Site: Southwestern side of San Nicolas Island, four miles from sand spit

The 1999 Point Mugu shipwreck study identifies an LCI (Landing Craft, Infantry) such as the one described above, and likely similar to the two LCIs stranded on Tender Beach in the early 1960s (see **Section 3.1.3**). The study located the wreck on the southwestern side of the island, four miles from the sand spit that extends east of the island. The wreckage of this LCI was originally located and mapped by archaeologist Phil Orr of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural

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<sup>79</sup> “3 from county saved from sea after boat sinks,” *Ventura Star Free Press*, January 9, 1982, A-1, Folder 123 Vessel: Intruder (---), Park Acc. CHIS 279/02, Park Cat. CHIS 6702, Outside NPS Wrecks, CHIS Shipwreck Research Files, CINP; Howorth, *Recent Surveys*, 104; and Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study, Table 5-1. The Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study lists this vessel as having been lost in June 1905. Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study, Table 4-2.

History in 1945. JRP was unable to obtain any further details about this vessel or the circumstances of its wreck.<sup>80</sup>

*Alfred A. Cunningham*

Official Number: ex. DD-752

Year Built: 1944

Year Wrecked: 1979, 1982

Function / Mission: Navy Destroyer / Target

Dimensions: 376.5 x 41.1 x 19 (maximum)

Tonnage: 2,200 (gross, standard)

Rig / Design: *Allen M. Sumner*-class Destroyer, 60,000-hp GE engines, geared turbines, two screws

Materials: Steel

Wreck Site: 43 miles due west of San Nicolas Island

*Alfred A. Cunningham* – named in honor of Marine Lt. Col. Alfred A. Cunningham who served during the First World War – served during the Second World War, the Korean Conflict, and the Vietnam War. The destroyer earned a total of fourteen battle stars: one for World War II, six for Korea, and seven for Vietnam. Decommissioned in February 1971, *Alfred A. Cunningham* was struck from the Naval Vessel Register four years later. According to the *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, in October 1979, after being made a target, the ship was sunk by five laser-guided bombs during a test exercise. The 1999 Point Mugu shipwreck study reports that *Alfred A. Cunningham* was sunk in July 1982 approximately 43 miles west of San Nicolas Island in nearly 6,500 feet of water.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study, Table 4-2 and Table 5-1. The details of the LCI offered above come courtesy of NavSource Online, Amphibious Photo Archive, <http://www.navsource.org/archives/10/15/150001.htm>, last accessed July 10, 2009. See also the LCI entries in Thomas Parrish and S.L.A. Marshall, *The Simon and Schuster Encyclopedia of World War II* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978). Information on the wreck's location and the work of Phil Orr provided by San Nicolas Island Environmental Office.

<sup>81</sup> Bauer and Roberts, *Register of the Ships*, *ibid.*; "Alfred A. Cunningham," *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, Department of the Navy – Naval Historical Center, website, [http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/a6/alfred\\_a\\_cunningham.htm](http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/a6/alfred_a_cunningham.htm), last accessed July 1, 2009; and Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study, Table 4-2, Table 5-1, and Figure 5-1.



*Alfred A. Cunningham* in review before President John F. Kennedy, June 6, 1963<sup>82</sup>

### *Agerholm*

Official Number: ex. DD-826

Year Built: 1946

Year Wrecked: 1974, 1982

Function / Mission: Navy Destroyer / Target

Dimensions: 390.5 x 41.08 x 18.5 (maximum)

Tonnage: 2,425 tons (standard displacement)

Rig / Design: *Gearing*-class Destroyer, 60,000-hp GE engines, geared turbines, two screws

Materials: Steel

Wreck Site: 27 miles due south of San Nicolas Island

*Agerholm* – named for posthumous Medal of Honor winner Marine Pfc. Harold C. Agerholm who died during World War II – served during the Korean War and Vietnam War. The destroyer earned four battle stars for its Korean service and eight for its Vietnam service. In 1960, *Agerholm* participated in the FRAM (Fleet Rehabilitation and Modernization) program, and was outfitted with the latest antisubmarine rockets, torpedoes, helicopter equipment, and radar and sonar instrumentation. The destroyer was overhauled once again in the 1970s, and continued to serve as an escort and in support roles. By the late 1970s, the vessel was largely engaged in training exercises. In December 1978, *Agerholm* was struck from the Navy Register. Sometime

<sup>82</sup> Picture taken by Photographer 2d Class R. D. Fennel. The attack carrier *Oriskany* (CVA-34) is in the immediate background. “Alfred A. Cunningham,” *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, Department of the Navy – Naval Historical Center, website, [http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/a6/alfred\\_a\\_cunningham.htm](http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/a6/alfred_a_cunningham.htm), last accessed July 1, 2009.

between May 1974 and July 1982, the ship was sunk as a target 27 miles due south of San Nicolas Island in nearly 2,800 feet of water.<sup>83</sup>



*Agerholm* anchored off Coronado, California in August 1974<sup>84</sup>

### *Deperm*

Official Number: ex. PCE-883/ YDG-10 / ADG-10

Year Built: 1944

Year Wrecked: 1982, 1987

Function / Mission: Navy Degaussing Ship/Target

Dimensions: 184.5 x 33.08 x 9.42 (maximum)

Tonnage: 850 (standard displacement)

Rig / Design: *PCE-842* Class Patrol Escort, two 900-hp GM 12-567A diesel engines, two shafts

Materials: Steel

Wreck Site: 32° 58' N. and 119° 41' W – approximately 27 miles southwest of San Nicolas Island

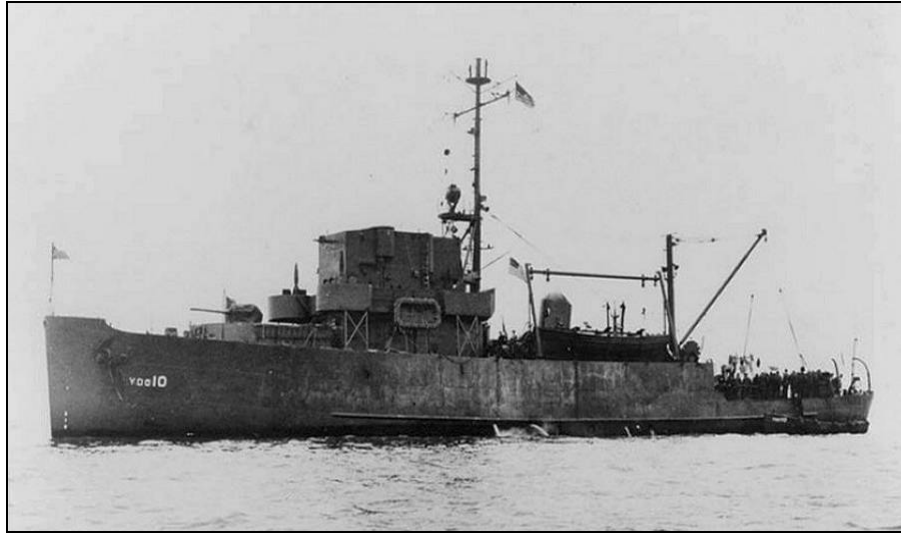
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<sup>83</sup> Bauer and Roberts, *Register of the Ships*, 201-203; and “Agerholm,” *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, Department of the Navy – Naval Historical Center, website, <http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/a4/agerholm.htm>, last accessed July 3, 2009; Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study, Table 4-2, Table 5-1, and Figure 5-1. According to the Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck study, *Agerholm* was lost in May 1974. Both Bauer and Roberts and the online *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships* (produced and maintained by the Naval Historical Center), note the vessel was sunk in July 1982.

<sup>84</sup> Photograph taken by Photographer 3d Class C. M. Phelps. From “Agerholm,” *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, Department of the Navy – Naval Historical Center, website, <http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/a4/agerholm.htm>, last accessed July 3, 2009.



Little is currently known of either the service or the circumstances behind the destruction of *Deperm*. Launched in 1944 and commissioned *USS PCE-883* in 1945, the vessel was later reclassified as a District Degaussing Vessel, *YDG-10*. Degaussing craft were designed to reduce the magnetic field of other ships, so as to make those vessels less susceptible to magnetic mines. Reclassified again as a Degaussing Ship, *ADG-10* was named *Deperm*. In February 1975, the vessel was struck from the Navy Register. Sometime between September 1982 and July 1987, *Deperm* was sunk as a target reportedly at coordinates 32° 58' N. and 119° 41' W. – approximately 27 miles from San Nicolas Island in nearly 2,800 feet of water.<sup>85</sup>



*YDG-10*, circa 1945-1946<sup>86</sup>

### *Higbee*

Official Number: ex. DD-806

Year Built: 1945

Year Wrecked: 1983, 1986

Function / Mission: Navy Destroyer / Target

Dimensions: 390.5 x 41.08 x 18.5 (maximum)

Tonnage: 2,425 (standard displacement)

<sup>85</sup> “Deperm (ADG 10), ex-YD-10, ex-PCE-883,” NavSource Online: Patrol Craft Escort Photo Archive, website, <http://www.navsource.org/archives/12/02883.htm>, last accessed July 2, 2009; Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study, Table 4-2 and Table 5-1. NavSource gives the coordinates the date of September 1982; the Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study gives July 1987 and 25 miles from San Nicolas

<sup>86</sup> Photograph taken by Robert Hurst; image currently in the possession of the Naval Historical Center (Photograph NH 77378). According to NavSource Online, the vessel was most likely “photographed in San Francisco Bay soon after her return to the West Coast in 1946.” “Deperm (ADG 10), ex-YD-10, ex-PCE-883,” NavSource Online: Patrol Craft Escort Photo Archive, website, <http://www.navsource.org/archives/12/02883.htm>, last accessed July 2, 2009.

Rig / Design: *Gearing*-class Destroyer, 60,000 hp GE engines, geared turbines, two screws

Materials: Steel

Wreck Site: Approximately 50 miles southwest of San Nicolas Island

*Higbee* – named in honor of the first living woman to receive a Navy Cross, Chief Nurse Lenah Sutcliffe Higbee – was the first Navy combat vessel to honor a female member of the Navy. The destroyer served with distinction as a radar picket destroyer during World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. *Higbee* earned a battle star for its World War II service and seven battle stars for its Korean War service. The destroyer also participated in the NASA PROJECT GEMINI manned spaceflight program as a recovery vessel in the early 1960s. In July 1979, *Higbee* was struck from the Naval Register. Sometime between 1983 and 1986, the former destroyer was sunk as a target approximately 50 miles southwest of San Nicolas Island.<sup>87</sup>

#### 4.2. Wrecks Previously Attributed to San Nicolas Island

In the course of our research, JRP found evidence that three wrecks – *Standard* in 1936, *Katinka* in 1939, and *Idol-Ours II* in 1943 – previously attributed to San Nicolas Island in secondary literature and in other studies did not take place in the vicinity of the island. Information on these vessels is presented below to correct any inaccuracies.

##### *Standard*

Official Number: 217385

Year Built: 1918

Year Wrecked: 1936

Function / Mission: Fishing

Dimensions: 59.08 x 15.4 x 6.8

Tonnage: 44 / 36

Rig / Design: Oil screw

Materials: Wood

Wreck Site: Santa Barbara Channel

The vessel *Standard* has been variously identified as *Standard No. 1* and *Standard II* (see **Section 4.1.2** for a discussion of the wreck of *Standard II*). Historian Peter Howorth noted the confusion in his 1988 interim report on historic and cultural sites on the island. The 1999 Point Mugu shipwreck study treated these boats – *Standard No. 1* and *Standard II* – as separate

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<sup>87</sup> Bauer and Roberts, *Register of the Ships*, 201-203; “Higbee,” *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, Department of the Navy – Naval Historical Center, website, <http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/h6/higbee.htm>, last accessed July 3, 2009; Point Mugu EIS, Table 4-2 and Table 5-1. Bauer and Roberts give 1983 as the date *Higbee* was sunk, while the Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study gives April 1986; the *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships* provides no date.

vessels. According to the Point Mugu study, *Standard No. 1* foundered 35 miles off of Begg Rock in July 1951; this information, however, corresponds to the wreck of *Standard II*. Elsewhere in this same report, the wreck of *Standard No. 1* is given as less than 50 miles from San Nicolas Island in nearly 4,000 feet of water.<sup>88</sup>

In our research, we did not find a vessel named *Standard No. 1* as having wrecked near San Nicolas Island or anywhere else in the Channel Islands. However, we did discover that the fishing boat *Standard*, built in 1918 and owned by the Van Camp Sea Food Company, sank in the Santa Barbara Channel on September 24, 1936 – a total loss.<sup>89</sup>

### *Katinka*

Official Number: 206946

Year Built: 1909

Year Wrecked: 1939

Function / Mission: Pleasure

Dimensions: 70.5 x 12 x 6

Tonnage: 37 / 23

Rig / Design: Oil screw, yacht

Materials: Wood

Wreck Site: Emerald Bay, Catalina Island

Since the 1950s, *Katinka* has been thought to have been lost in the vicinity of San Nicolas Island. According to a piece appearing in the *Oxnard Press-Courier* in December 1958, the boat went down on the south side of San Nicolas Island in 1939. Thirty years later, in his study of cultural and historic sites on the island, Peter Howorth indicated that *Katinka* was lost on San Nicolas Island but that he had “found little data about it to date.” The 1999 Point Mugu shipwreck study likewise reported that *Katinka* was lost at the island.

Our research indicates that the vessel was lost in 1939, but that loss was the result of a fire that consumed *Katinka* in Emerald Bay, Catalina Island on December 11, 1939. No lives were lost.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Howorth, *Recent Surveys*, 103; Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study, Table 4-2 and 5-1.

<sup>89</sup> “Standard,” Box 10 From: Smith Thompson To: Utacarbon, Index of Marine Documents, 1936-1965, Marine Safety Office, Long Beach, CA, RG 26, NARA-Laguna Niguel; “Vessels Lost” from *MVUS* 1937, 528, and Application of Owner or Master for Official Number, “Standard,” December 11, 1918, Folder: 142 Vessel: Standard, Park Acc. CHIS 279/01, Park Cat. No. CHIS 6702, Shipwrecks Inside NPS, Louise Ray-Zingara, CHIS Shipwreck Research Files, CINP.

<sup>90</sup> “Katinka,” Box 6 From: Kaimana To: Mary Iren, Index of Marine Documents, 1936-1965, Marine Safety Office, Long Beach, CA, RG 26; Approval of Home Port of Vessel, Port of Los Angeles, Calif., August 11, 1938, Folder o/s Katinka, Box 3, Vessel Documentation Files, 1938-1983, RG 36, NARA-Laguna Niguel; Irvin M. Hansen and Ralph M. Robison, “C” Marine Investigation Board to Director, Bureau of Marine Inspection & Navigation, Department of Commerce, December 27, 1939, Folder: Katinka, Box 51, Marine Vessel Inspection & Investigations

### *Idol-Ours II*

Official Number: 225241

Year Built: 1925

Year Wrecked: 1943

Function / Mission: Passenger / Pleasure

Dimensions: 48.6 x 10.6 x 5.5

Tonnage: 25 / 17

Rig / Design: Gas screw, yacht

Materials: Wood

Wreck Site: Avalon Bay, Catalina Island

Conflicting information exists with regard to this vessel – which variously appears as *Idle Hour*, *Idle Hours*, *Idle Outs*, and *Idol-Ours II* – in other studies and in secondary literature. Archaeologist Bruce Bryan reported that *Idle Hour* was “a 60-foot cabin cruiser powered by a Diesel engine” chartered to transport an archaeological party from Los Angeles to San Nicolas Island and which was subsequently lost in 1943. The *Oxnard Press-Courier* in December 1958 – in the same article in which it reported on *Katinka* (see above) – likewise reported that *Idle Hour* was lost on the south side of the island in 1943. Historian Peter Howorth indicated in 1988 that a second, separate vessel called *Idle Ours* had been lost in the vicinity of San Nicolas Island but it was likely the same vessel as *Idle Hours*. The 1999 Point Mugu shipwreck study identifies two separate vessels – *Idle Hour* and *Idle Outs* – as being lost somewhere within the Pacific Sea Range.

Our research only uncovered information on a single vessel that came close to matching Bryan’s description and date of wreck: *Idol-Ours II*. This boat, owned by William Mead of Los Angeles, sunk in Avalon Bay, Catalina Island on December 9, 1943, and was declared a total loss.<sup>91</sup>

### **4.3. Downed Aircraft in the Vicinity of San Nicolas Island**

In the course of our research, JRP found that 20 military aircraft and one civilian airplane were lost off the coast of either San Nicolas Island or Begg Rock between 1944 and 1962. Aircraft lost in the ocean are not considered shipwrecks under the Abandoned Shipwreck Act of 1988. As mentioned above (see **Section 3.13**), military craft lost in the ocean specifically fall under the provisions of the Sunken Military Craft Act of 2005 with the military retaining title and control

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Case Files, RG 41, NARA-San Francisco; “Channel Islands Claimed Many Ships over the Years,” *Oxnard Press-Courier*, December 23, 1958; Howorth, *Recent Surveys*, 103; Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study, Table 4-1.

<sup>91</sup> Bryan quoted in Wreck notes, 5, San Nicolas Island Environmental Office; “Channel Islands Claimed Many Ships over the Years,” *Oxnard Press-Courier*, December 23, 1958; Howorth, *Recent Surveys*, 103; Point Mugu EIS Shipwreck Study, Table 4-1; “Idol –Ours II,” Box 5, From: Hagen To: J-W No. 1, Index of Marine Documents, 1936-1965, Marine Safety Office, Long Beach CA, RG 26, NARA-Laguna Niguel.

over all sea-, air-, and spacecraft submerged beneath US territorial waters. Although these craft exist outside the parameters of this study, they do have the potential to wash ashore and complicate determinations of shipwrecks – therefore, the types of craft lost are described here.

The majority of these downed aircraft were airplanes, but at least one was a helicopter. They were: a Vought F4U *Corsair* (in 1944), a Vought SB2U *Vindicator* (in 1942), six Grumman TBF / General Motors TBM *Avengers* (between 1944 and 1945); seven Curtiss SB2C *Helldivers* (between 1943 and 1945); two Grumman F4F *Wildcats* (in 1947); an unidentified helicopter (in 1956); an unidentified aircraft from the carrier *Yorktown* (in 1962); and one F9F *Cougar* (in 1962). The circumstances behind these losses are not entirely clear. Information provided by the Navy's Naval History & Heritage Command offer a variety of reasons for the losses – including a mid-air collision, engine failure, and fuel exhaustion – but do not detail why these craft were in the area. Newspaper accounts, such as for the 1956 helicopter wreck off Begg Rock or the 1962 crash of the airplane from the carrier *Yorktown*, similarly convey scant information as to the planes' missions or why the craft wrecked or crashed.<sup>92</sup>

The known military aircraft were common Navy carrier fighters and bombers. The *Corsair* was a single-engine fighter, introduced in 1941, but was not considered carrier-worthy until 1944. The *Vindicator* was a dive-bomber initially put into production in 1939. Notably, 167 of these aircraft saw service during the Battle of Midway. The *Avenger* was a versatile torpedo bomber introduced in 1942; it was highly-customizable and could be deployed from either land bases or carriers. The *Helldiver* was a dive-bomber specifically designed for carrier duty. Although plagued by production delays, the *Helldiver* ultimately became the most widely-used dive bomber in World War II. The *Wildcat* was the chief Navy fighter during the first two years of the Pacific war. The *Cougar* was the continuation of the Grumman *Panther*, introduced in 1947. The *Cougar* was used extensively during the Korean War, and continued serving into the early 1970s as a training and target craft.<sup>93</sup>

The lost civilian aircraft, described by the *Long Beach Press-Telegram* as a “light seaplane,” went missing on Friday, January 12, 1954. A Robert DeLuccia accompanied pilot Norman C. Hale of Midway City on a flight to the island to observe fish from the air. The two left Sunset

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<sup>92</sup> “Known Aircraft Losses in the Vicinity of San Nicolas Island,” MS-Excel spreadsheet provided by Department of the Navy, Naval History & Heritage Command, Underwater Archaeology Branch, Washington Navy Yard, DC; “Navy Pilot Killed As Planes Collide,” *Oakland Tribune*, December 14, 1947; “Three Perish As Helicopter Falls Into Sea,” *Moberly (Missouri) Monitor Index*, May 12, 1956; “Three Drown as Navy Copter Falls Into Ocean,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 12, 1956 and “Navy Identifies 3 Men Killed in Copter Crash,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 13, 1956; “Two Ships Hunt Lost Navy Jet,” *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, December 5, 1961 and “7 Southlanders Hunted in Three Air Crashes,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 6, 1961; “Hunt for Carrier Pilot Given Up,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 3, 1962.

<sup>93</sup> “F4U,” “SB2U,” “TBF,” “SB2C,” “F4F,” *Encyclopedia of World War II*, 183-184, 522, and 623-624; and “Grumman F9F-8B Cougar,” *Naval History and Heritage Command*, Department of the Navy website, <http://www.history.navy.mil/museums/paxmuseum/f9f/f9f.htm>, last accessed August 18, 2009.



Beach early morning Friday and were expected to return by 9 am. When the two failed to return the Coast Guard launched an air and sea search; the results of that search are unknown.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> “Air-Sea Hunt Resumed for Lost Fliers,” *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, June 13, 1954.

## 5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

### 5.1. Summary of Findings

In the course of this study, JRP was able to identify 45 shipwrecks, losses and casualties, in the vicinity of San Nicolas Island over a period of nearly 450 years. Of this number, 15 appear to have occurred within the geographic limits (1 mile out from both San Nicolas Island and Begg Rock) and temporal limits (1542-1965) of this study and can be considered shipwrecks under the provisions of the Abandoned Shipwreck Act of 1988.

These wrecks are:

- *John Begg* (1824)
- *Ranger* (1897)
- *La Gironde* (1901)
- *Selma* (1916)
- *Lillian* (1916)
- *Coney Island* (1926)
- *Miss Santa Barbara* (1926)
- *F. H. Hillman* (1927)
- *Nora II* (1938)
- *Empress* (1942)
- *C.W.W. 26* (1943)
- *Steel Chemist* (1949)
- *#4413* (1951)
- *America II* (1952)
- *Deep Six* (1963)

As noted above, all of the Navy target vessels and downed aircraft identified as having been wrecked in the vicinity of the San Nicolas Island fall under the Sunken Military Craft Act of 2005 and are precluded from the provisions of the Abandoned Shipwreck Act of 1988.

## **5.2. Management Considerations**

Civilian shipwrecks, such as the 15 identified above, fall under the provisions of the Abandoned Shipwreck Act of 1988 and therefore merit consideration as to their management of cultural resources under the act. *National Register Bulletin 20* supplements this act, furnishing the necessary guidelines for determining whether these wrecks are National Register-eligible.

### **5.2.1. Abandoned Shipwreck Act of 1988**

The Abandoned Shipwreck Act of 1988, signed into law by President Ronald Reagan on April 28, 1988, provides the basis for the consideration of abandoned shipwrecks as cultural resources. The Act provided that the federal government assert title to three types of abandoned shipwrecks:

1. abandoned shipwrecks embedded in a State's submerged lands;
2. abandoned shipwrecks embedded in coralline formations protected by a State on its submerged lands;
3. abandoned shipwrecks located on a State's submerged lands and included in or determined eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>95</sup>

The federal government transferred its title to the majority of those shipwrecks to the various States to manage, and retained its title to shipwrecks located in or on public lands, and Indian tribes hold title to shipwrecks located in or on Indian lands.

The Act also provided that the National Park Service prepare the guidelines to help states and federal agencies carry out the act. The guidelines note:

In accordance with the Act, the guidelines are intended to maximize the enhancement of cultural resources; foster a partnership among sport divers, fishermen, archeologists, salvors, and other interests to manage shipwreck resources of the States and the United States; facilitate access and utilization by recreational interests; and recognize the interests of individuals and groups engaged in shipwreck discovery and salvage.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> <http://www.nps.gov/archeology/submerged/intro.htm>; accessed December 8, 2008.

<sup>96</sup> <http://www.nps.gov/archeology/submerged/intro.htm>; accessed December 8, 2008.

The NPS's "Abandoned Shipwreck Act Guidelines" provide advice to state and federal agencies on how to effectively manage shipwrecks in waters under their ownership or control. The program has a number of components:

- (a) Locate and identify shipwrecks;
- (b) Determine which shipwrecks are abandoned and meet the criteria for assuming title under the Abandoned Shipwreck Act;
- (c) Determine which shipwrecks are historic;
- (d) Identify recreational and other values that a shipwreck may possess and the shipwreck's current and potential uses;
- (e) Provide for the long-term protection of historic shipwrecks;
- (f) Protect the rights of owners of non-abandoned shipwrecks;
- (g) Consult and maintain a cooperative relationship with the various shipwreck interest groups;
- (h) Cooperate with State and Federal agencies and sovereign nations having an interest in shipwreck management;
- (i) Provide sport divers with reasonable access to explore shipwrecks;
- (j) Provide for public appreciation, understanding, and enjoyment of shipwrecks and maritime history;
- (k) Conduct archeological research on shipwrecks where research will yield information important to understanding the past;
- (l) Provide for private sector participation in shipwreck research projects; and
- (m) Provide for commercial salvage and other private sector recovery of shipwrecks when such activities are in the public interest.<sup>97</sup>

The guidelines take into account that agencies may employ different activities and methods in carrying out their programs of shipwreck management. The guidelines are advisory. The NPS noted that:

States and Federal agencies are encouraged to use the "Abandoned Shipwreck Act Guidelines" and other applicable standards and guidelines to establish, review, revise, and implement programs to manage shipwrecks under their ownership or

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<sup>97</sup> <http://www.nps.gov/archeology/submerged/intro.htm>; accessed December 8, 2008.

control. States and Federal agencies are free to adopt the “Abandoned Shipwreck Act Guidelines” in their entirety, make changes to accommodate the diverse and sometimes unique needs of each State or Federal agency, reject parts as inapplicable, or use alternative approaches.

However, it is clear from the legislative history that the U.S. Congress intends for State shipwreck management programs to be consistent with the Abandoned Shipwreck Act and these “Guidelines” and for Federal shipwreck management programs to be consistent with the “Guidelines” to the extent consistent with other applicable Federal law (U.S. House of Representatives Report No. 100-514, Pt. 1, p. 3, and Pt. 2, p. 7).<sup>98</sup>

As noted above, the 15 wrecked vessels identified in JRP’s study are subject to the provisions of the Abandoned Shipwreck Act. From the available information, all are abandoned and meet the criteria for establishing title – the question of whether any of these wrecks may be considered historic and be managed as historic cultural resources eligible for the National Register can only be addressed with reference to the guidelines furnished by the National Park Service in *National Register Bulletin 20*.

#### 5.2.2. *National Register Bulletin 20*

*National Register Bulletin 20*, by James P. Delgado and a National Park Service Maritime Task Force, provides guidance for “identifying, evaluating, and nominating historic vessels and shipwrecks to the National Register of Historic Places.” Section One of the bulletin refers to vessels, typically fully intact and floating, or in a state of substantial deterioration (such as hulks). Obviously, consideration of existing, intact vessels is not pertinent to this project. Vessels – including shipwrecks – must meet one or more of the four standard National Register criteria of significance and have integrity to be considered eligible. In general, the criteria of significance are:

- A. be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. be associated with the lives of persons significant in the past; or
- C. embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. have yielded, or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

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<sup>98</sup> <http://www.nps.gov/archeology/submerged/intro.htm>; accessed December 8, 2008.

With regard to integrity, according to *Bulletin 20*, seven aspects must be considered: location (that a vessel is located in a port or other location with which the vessel historically had some association), design (that a vessel retain its historically significant appearance), setting (that a vessel is maintained in the water), materials (that the physical elements of vessel's design and construction have been maintained), workmanship (the renewal of materials in-kind), feeling (the evocation of an aesthetic or historic sense of the past), and association (a period or accurate waterfront setting for a vessel).

In addition, as a general rule, certain vessels – including shipwrecks – are not National Register eligible. These are: vessels that are less than 50 years of age; vessels owned by religious organizations and employed for religious purposes; replicas of vessels; and vessel collections.<sup>99</sup>

Shipwrecks also provoke unique challenges that set them apart from consideration of existing, intact vessels; Section Two of the bulletin therefore specifically discusses documentation of shipwreck nominations. “A shipwreck is any vessel that has foundered, stranded, or wrecked,” note the authors. “This includes vessels that exist as intact or scattered components on or in the sea bed, lake bed, river bed, mud flats, beaches or other shorelines.” Shipwrecks are considered archaeological sites for purposes of National Register review. The bulletin describes three concerns regarding such sites that must be addressed during evaluation:

- a) description, including historic and present site description, natural and cultural post-depositional impacts, and description of loss or wreck event;
- b) significance including the direct application of National Register criteria, context, and integrity; and
- c) geographical data, including boundary justification and verbal description.

*Bulletin 20* offers such wrecks as that of the Civil War ironclad warship *USS Monitor* and the Brown's Ferry Wreck in South Carolina as examples of NRHP wrecks.<sup>100</sup>

Although it is beyond the scope of this project to provide an in-depth review of the National Register-eligibility of the 15 wrecks that occurred within the study parameters, some generalizations may be made with regard to the Navy's responsibility for managing these cultural resources.

In short, none are likely to be eligible for the National Register. All can certainly be considered as having “foundered, stranded, or wrecked.” However, not all are either at least 50 years old or “exist[ing] as intact or as scattered components on or in sea bed...beaches or other shorelines.”

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<sup>99</sup> James P. Delgado and a National Park Service Maritime Task Force, National Register Bulletin 20, *Nominating Historic Vessels and Shipwrecks to the National Register of Historic Places*, 2-14.

<sup>100</sup> Delgado et al., National Register Bulletin 20, *Nominating Historic Vessels and Shipwrecks*, 14-20.



Moreover, the prevailing environmental conditions of these wrecks raise practical questions of their National Register-eligibility and may limit the Navy's cultural-resources management responsibility.

### *John Begg*

In terms of historical significance, *John Begg* was the first foreign vessel to trade legally along the California coast in the Spanish and Mexican period – a point that argues in favor of the vessel's inclusion on the National Register under Criteria A (association with events that made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history) or D (may be likely to yield important historical information). However, the ship was ultimately freed from the rock that now bears its name. It is unlikely that any components of *John Begg* remain. If any did, given the currents and weather conditions of the area, it would be difficult to connect any flotsam and jetsam in the vicinity of Begg Rock to the ship. The vessel also does not appear to be historically significant under Criterion B (associated with the lives of persons significant in our past) or Criterion C (embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction).

### *Ranger*

Under Criteria A or D, the shipping vessel *Ranger* could be considered eligible for the National Register. It participated in the trade between San Nicolas Island and the mainland, and appears to have been particularly engaged in the sheep ranching industry. *Ranger*, however, was apparently salvaged in 1898, and it is unlikely – given both this salvage and the conditions of the area – that a portion of the vessel remains. Like *John Begg*, the vessel does not appear to be significant under either Criteria B or C.

### *La Gironde*

*La Gironde* participated in the coastal trade along California in the early-twentieth century, and could therefore be considered historically significant under either Criterion A or Criterion D. Moreover, the vessel as a center-board schooner appears to be unique among shipping vessels at this time and could therefore be considered significant under Criterion C. However, the coastal trade has been studied, and more research would be necessary to determine the design distinctiveness of *La Gironde*. Most critically, like several other vessels that wrecked at San Nicolas Island, *La Gironde* appears to have been largely salvaged; determinations of that which may remain of the vessel on the island would therefore be difficult to make.

### *Selma*

A case may be made for the fishing boat *Selma* under either Criteria A or D. Fishing vessels in general, however, are well studied and it would seem unlikely that the study of the *Selma* wreck would yield new insights. Our information also suggests that the vessel was neither associated with a historically significant person (Criterion B) nor distinctive in design and construction (Criterion C). Moreover, the location of this wreck is unknown at present, and it is unlikely that any physical evidence of *Selma* may be recovered.

### *Lillian*

The passenger boat *Lillian*, which appears to have been engaged in transporting people along the west coast, could be considered eligible for the National Register under Criterion A. Passenger craft, however, are well studied, and nothing else appears to set the vessel apart from other such transports of the period. Additionally, the vessel does not seem to be associated with a historically significant person (Criterion B) or have a distinctive historic design (Criterion C). A study of the wreck therefore promises little new information (Criterion D).

### *Coney Island*

Of the 15 wrecked vessels identified by JRP, at present less is known about *Coney Island* than any other, and that alone makes any evaluations of National Register eligibility difficult. Moreover, within 20 years of its discovery, *Coney Island* had apparently vanished from San Nicolas Island. This suggests that even if we were able to learn more about *Coney Island*, there would not be any physical resource to manage.

### *Miss Santa Barbara*

*Miss Santa Barbara* participated in rum-running during the 1920s, and arguably might shed light on the design of bootlegging vessels – important issues under Criteria A, C, and D. It does not appear to have been associated with a historically significant person (Criterion B). The vessel, however, appears to have exploded and as the site of that explosion is unclear the wreck – barring any new information – is unlikely to be found.

### *F.H. Hillman*

*F.H. Hillman* was reportedly the largest oil tanker of the 1920s, a quality that would merit National Register consideration under Criterion C. A case may also be made under Criterion A (for the vessel's association with the development of the oil industry). Nothing about the tanker suggests that a study of its wreck would reveal any new historical information (Criterion D) and it does not appear to have been associated with a historically significant person (Criterion B).

However, *F.H. Hillman* – like *John Begg* – was recovered. This makes it unlikely that any debris in the vicinity of the shipwreck can be found.

### *Nora II*

Of the wreck vessels discussed here, *Nora II* offers the strongest argument for National Register eligibility under Criterion A. The vessel was engaged in transporting goods and people in the Channel Islands, and seems to have been especially involved in the San Nicolas Island sheep ranching industry. It does not appear to have any significance under Criterion B (association with a historically important person), C (embody the characteristics of a distinctive historic design), or D (likely to yield new historical information). The location of the wreck of *Nora II* is also known, and photographic evidence exists of its location. The integrity of the wreck site, however, may complicate a National Register evaluation. Over the years, many individuals have had access to the site, and as the wreck has been exposed to the elements, it may lack the physical elements to qualify for NRHP-status. Further research would be necessary to make such a determination.

### *Empress*

Little is known about the *Empress* wreck, beyond the fact that the barge – like thousands of other similar craft – was engaged in the coastal trade. The location of its wreck is unknown. At present, nothing indicates that this vessel is historically significant under any of the National Register criteria.

### *C.W.W. 26*

Like the *Empress* wreck, there are few details with regard to the wrecked scow *C.W.W. 26*. It does not appear to have significance under any of the National Register criteria. Its wreck site may have been located by divers; more research, however, would be necessary to make such a determination.

### *Steel Chemist*

*Steel Chemist* was subject to one of the area's most extensive salvage operations, and could therefore merit consideration under Criteria A or even D. The freighter does not appear to have significance under either Criteria B or C. Yet, evaluation of this vessel to the National Register has the same problems as other salvaged vessels – the absence of remains and the difficulty connecting any presumed remains to *Steel Chemist*.

#4413

Much like the wrecks of *Empress* and *C.W.W. 26*, the wreck of #4413 appears to lack any significance under the National Register criteria – it seems unremarkable with regard to any past historical events, persons, or ship construction or design, and its wreck is unlikely to yield new information about the vessel. The wreck itself has been located, but once more with regard to its exposure to the elements, it is unknown if the wreck site possesses any integrity.

### *America II*

The fishing boat *America II* is at present unlikely to be National Register eligible. At present, the information on the wreck vessel fails to suggest any historical significance under Criteria A, B, C, or D. Moreover, the site of the wreck of *America II* is only generally known, which would complicate determinations of wreck remains.

### *Deep Six*

It is unlikely that *Deep Six* is National Register eligible. The boat is less than 50 years old, and all available information indicates that it was not a distinctive type of vessel – a cabin cruiser – which would merit consideration under Criteria C or D. *Deep Six* is not currently known to be associated with an historical period, event, or person (Criteria A and B, respectively).

## **5.3. Conclusion**

In the historic era of seafaring, from the sixteenth through the twentieth century, San Nicolas Island has proven to be a major navigation hazard. In that period, more than 40 vessels have been wrecked at the island, at nearby Begg Rock, or in the waters surrounding San Nicolas Island. While not all of these wrecks were the product of poor weather or sea conditions, the majority were. Between 1542 and 1965, 15 vessels wrecked within one mile of either San Nicolas Island or Begg Rock – fishing and shipping vessels for the most part. Little set these craft apart from the thousands of other boats and ships that plied the waters along the California coast in this same period. While the possibility exists for new information to come to light that might alter our understanding of the historical significance of these wrecks, the likelihood that such information would increase the eligibility of a given wreck for listing in the National Register of Historic Places appears low.

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## **7. PREPARERS' QUALIFICATIONS**

This report was prepared under the direction of Rand F. Herbert (M.A.T in History, University of California, Davis), a principal at JRP with more than 30 years professional experience working as a consulting historian on a wide variety of historical research and cultural resource management projects as a researcher, writer, and project manager. Mr. Herbert provided overall direction for this project, undertook research, and edited the report.

Staff Historian Scott Miltenberger (Ph.D. in History, University of California, Davis) conducted research and prepared this report. Dr. Miltenberger has been with JRP since 2006 conducting various historical research investigations and historic survey and evaluation studies.

Staff Historian Joseph Freeman (MA in History, University of California, Riverside) assisted in project research and report preparation. Mr. Freeman has been with JRP since 2007.

Ms. Rebecca Flores assisted with report and graphics production.

Based on their level of education and experience, Mr. Herbert, Dr. Miltenberger, and Mr. Freeman qualify as historians / architectural historians under the United States Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards (as defined in 36 CFR Part 61).



APPENDIX A: SHIPWRECKS WITHIN TWO MILES OF SAN NICOLAS ISLAND AND BEGG ROCK, ORGANIZED BY YEAR WRECKED

Name	Official Number	Year Built	Year Wrecked	Function / Mission	Dimensions in Feet (length x beam x depth unless otherwise noted)	Tonnage (gross / net)	Rig / Design	Materials	Wreck Site
<i>John Begg</i>	Unknown	1820	1824	Shipping	Unknown	160 (gross)	Brig, single deck	Wood	Begg Rock, seven miles from San Nicolas Island
<i>Leon</i>	Unknown	Unknown	1894?	Pleasure?	Unknown	Unknown	Sloop	Wood	Unknown
<i>Ranger</i>	111013	1892	1897	Shipping	30.6 x 10.1 x 4.4	12.75 / 12.17	Sloop	Wood	Sand spit on eastern side of San Nicolas Island?
<i>La Gironde</i>	140153	1875	1901	Shipping	14.8 x 31.7 x 9.2	204.51 / 194.61	Schooner, two masts, center board	Wood	Southwest shore of San Nicolas Island, three miles from sand spit
<i>May</i> [schooner]	Unknown	Unknown	1903	Fishing (lobster)	Unknown	Unknown	Schooner	Wood	Southern end of San Nicolas Island
<i>May</i> [launch]	Unknown	Unknown	1909?	Transport / cultural-scientific survey	Unknown	Unknown	Launch	Wood	Unknown
<i>Selma</i>	Unknown	Unknown	1916	Fishing	Unknown	Unknown	Launch	Wood	Unknown (San Nicolas Island)
<i>Lillian</i>	207500	1910	1916	Passenger	33 x 9.6 x 36.	9 / 7	Gas screw	Wood	West side of San Nicolas Island
<i>Coney Island</i>	Unknown	Unknown	1926?	Fishing?	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Wood	“Coney Point,” northeast shore of San Nicolas Island
<i>Miss Santa Barbara</i>	Unknown	Unknown	1926	Passenger / Smuggling	60 (length)	Unknown	“High speed” cruiser	Wood	Unknown
<i>F.H. Hillman</i>	221695	1919	1927	Shipping	500 x 68.2 x 30	9,835 / 6,006	Steam screw, tanker	Steel	Southeast end of San Nicolas Island
<i>New Moon</i>	217498	1919	1931	Fishing	55 x 14.3 x 6.6	36 / 24	Gas screw, purse seiner	Wood	Unknown
<i>Sport</i>	Unknown	Unknown	1937	Fishing (lobster)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
<i>Nora II</i>	216272	1918	1938	Fishing	55.4 x 15.2 x 5.4	24 / 16	Oil screw	Wood	North shore of San Nicolas Island, one mile from Coney Point
<i>Empress</i>	202834	1906	1942	Shipping	77.5 x 18.4 x 2.7	39 / 26	Gas screw, barge	Unknown	Unknown (San Nicolas Island)
<i>C.W.W. 26</i>	175716	1943	1943	Shipping	61.4 x 21.65 x 4.55	58 / 58	Scow, no propelling power	Steel	Unknown (San Nicolas Island)
<i>Steel Chemist</i>	252037	1943	1949	Shipping	468.5 x 69.6 x 29.5	7,956 / 4,560	Steam screw, double hull, C-3 cargo carrier	Steel	South side of the northwest corner of San Nicolas Island
<i>#4413</i>	176214	1944	1951	Shipping	117.5 x 40 x 9.15	389.69 / 389	Scow	Wood	Sand spit on eastern side of San Nicolas Island
<i>America II</i>	Unknown	Unknown	1952	Fishing	45 (length)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Western side of San Nicolas Island
<i>Ginger</i>	247604	1945	1954	Fishing	31.7 x 10.6 x 4.6	9 / 6	Oil screw	Wood	Unknown (San Nicolas Island)
<i>Volga Boatman</i>	216498	1918	1954	Fishing	59 x 15.3 x 6.3	44 / 18	Oil screw	Wood	Unknown
<i>Makassar Strait</i>	ex. AVG-91 / ACV-91 / CVE-91 / CVU-91	1944	1962	Navy Escort Carrier / Target	512.25 x 65.16 x 22.34 (maximum)	7,800 (standard displacement)	<i>Casablanca</i> -class Escort Carrier, 9,000-hp Skinner Uniflow engines, 2 screws	Steel	Northwestern shore of San Nicolas Island
<i>LCI</i> [2 vessels]	Unknown	1942?	1962-1964	Troop transport / Target	158	216 (light) / 234 (landing / 389 (loaded)	Two sets of GM diesel engines, four per shaft, twin variable-pitch propellers	Steel	“Tender Beach,” northwest shore of San Nicolas Island
<i>Deep Six</i>	Unknown	Unknown	1963	Passenger / Pleasure	30 (length)	Unknown	Cruiser	Unknown	Half-a-mile from San Nicolas Island
<i>Jazzbo</i>	Unknown	Unknown	1963	Passenger / Pleasure?	30 (length)	Unknown	Cabin Cruiser	Unknown	Unknown (San Nicolas Island)
<i>Margie A.</i>	258165 / ex. LCVP C 20551	1943	1970	Fishing	33.1 x 10.7 x 4.7	12 / 5	Oil screw, converted Navy LCVP	Wood	500 yards off southwest end of San Nicolas Island
<i>Thetis</i>	279267	1959	1972	Shipping	685.1 x 93.2 x 48.8	26,611 / 14,576	Steam screw, tanker	Steel	2,000 yards off eastern end of San Nicolas Island
<i>Roughneck</i>	271277	1956	1980	Fishing	64.83	39 / 32	Diesel, 450-hp engines	Steel	Two miles northeast of San Nicolas Island
<i>Sara Jane</i>	255802	1948	1984	Fishing	37.8 x 12.8 x 5.7	18.49 / 8	Oil screw	Wood	Unknown (San Nicolas Island)
<i>Cabildo</i>	ex. LSD-16	1945	1983, 1985	Navy Landing Ship Dock / Target	457.75 x 72.17 x 18 (maximum draft)	4,900 (standard displacement)	<i>Casa Grande</i> -class Landing Ship Dock	Steel	Western side of San Nicolas Island
<i>YFU-5</i>	ex. LCT-592 / LSU-592 / LCU-592 / YFU-5	1943	Unknown	Navy Harbor Utility Craft / Target	119.08 x 32.67 x 5 (maximum)	320 (maximum floating displacement)	<i>Landing Craft Tank (Mark 6)</i> , 3 Grey Marine Diesels, 3 propellers, 225 hp per shaft	Steel	Northwestern shore of San Nicolas Island, half a-mile east of Coney Point

APPENDIX B: SHIPWRECKS WITHIN TWO AND 50 MILES OF SAN NICOLAS ISLAND AND BEGG ROCK, ORGANIZED BY YEAR WRECKED

Name	Official Number	Year Built	Year Wrecked	Function / Mission	Dimensions in Feet (length x beam x depth unless otherwise noted)	Tonnage (gross / net)	Rig / Design	Materials	Wreck Site
<i>Red Wing</i>	220328	1920	1928	Fishing	50 (length)	43 (gross)	Gas screw, purse seiner	Wood	Seven miles south of San Nicolas Island
<i>Standard II</i>	235956	1927	1951	Fishing	66.9 x 17.3 x 7.1	70 / 34	Oil screw	Wood	35 miles southwest of Begg Rock
<i>Pacific</i>	227246	1928	1951	Fishing	73 x 18.7 x 8.6	83 (gross)	Oil screw, purse seiner	Wood	15 miles northeast of San Nicolas Island
<i>LCI</i>	Unknown	1942?	1945	Troop transport	158	216 (light) / 234 (landing / 389 (loaded)	Two sets of GM diesel engines, four per shaft, twin variable-pitch propellers	Steel	San Nicolas Island, four miles from eastern sand spit
<i>Gaga</i>	280973	1950	1963	Fishing	35.3 x 11.5 x 3.8	13.19 / 10	Oil screw	Wood	Ten miles east of San Nicolas Island
<i>Intruder</i>	Unknown	Unknown	1982	Fishing	43 (length)	Unknown	Diving vessel	Unknown	25 miles north of San Nicolas Island
<i>Alfred A. Cunningham</i>	ex. DD-752	1944	1979, 1982	Navy Destroyer / Target	376.5 x 41.1 x 19 (maximum draft)	2,200 (standard displacement)	<i>Allen M. Sumner</i> -class Destroyer, 60,000-hp GE engines, geared turbines, two screws	Steel	43 miles west of San Nicolas Island
<i>Agerholm</i>	ex. DD-826	1946	1974, 1982	Navy Destroyer / Target	390.5 x 41.1 x 18.5 (maximum draft)	2,425 (standard displacement)	<i>Gearing</i> -class Destroyer, 60,000-hp GE engines, geared turbines, two screws	Steel	25 miles due south of San Nicolas Island
<i>Deperm</i>	ex. PCE-883/ YDG-10 / ADG-10	1944	1982, 1987	Navy Degaussing Ship/Target	184.5 x 33.08 x 9.42 (maximum draft)	850 (standard displacement)	<i>PCE-842</i> Class Patrol Escort, two 900-hp GM 12-567A diesel engines, two shafts	Steel	32° 58' N. and 119° 41' W – approximately 27 miles southwest of San Nicolas Island
<i>Higbee</i>	ex. DD-806	1945	1983, 1986	Navy Destroyer / Target	390.5 x 41.1 x 18.5 (maximum draft)	2,425 (standard displacement)	<i>Gearing</i> -class Destroyer, 60,000-hp GE engines, geared turbines, two screws	Steel	Approximately 50 miles southwest of San Nicolas Island

APPENDIX C: SHIPWRECKS PREVIOUSLY ATTRIBUTED TO SAN NICOLAS ISLAND, ORGANIZED BY YEAR WRECKED

Name	Official Number	Year Built	Year Wrecked	Function / Mission	Dimensions in Feet (length x beam x depth unless otherwise noted)	Tonnage (gross / net)	Rig / Design	Materials	Wreck Site
<i>Standard</i>	217385	1918	1936	Fishing	50.08 x 15.4 x 6.8	44 / 36	Oil screw	Wood	Santa Barbara Channel
<i>Katinka</i>	206946	1909	1939	Passenger / Pleasure	70.5 x 12 x 6	37 / 23	Oil screw, yacht	Wood	Emerald Bay, Catalina Island
<i>Idol-Ours II</i>	225241	1925	1943	Passenger / Pleasure	48.6 x 10.6 x 5.5	25 / 17	Gas screw, yacht	Wood	Avalon Bay, Catalina Island